

# Great Stories from the World of Sport



# Great Stories from the World of Sport

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EDITED BY

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*For ANTONIA*  
*who is a newcomer to sports*  
*and for*  
WILLIAM G. MORRIS  
*who isn't .*

# EDITORIAL NOTE

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**A**S BOOKS GO, this one has been a long time in the making. Although the bulk of the work has been done during the past three years, it was no less than twenty years ago that the two editors, separately, began their groundwork. Over the years a great many of our friends have helped us enormously in one way or another—lending us books, putting us on the path of others, and generally helping us in our quest to find the best sports stories ever written by their indiscriminate enthusiasm for the project and their willingness to discuss it interminably.

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P. S.  
H. W. W.

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# INTRODUCTION

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ONE OF THE FINEST lines in the English language is the one which begins William Hazlitt's famous tribute to John Cavanagh, the early nineteenth-century master of hand-fives, "When a person dies who does any one thing better than anyone else in the world, which so many others are trying to do well, it leaves a gap in society." It is to be wondered if Hazlitt himself paused when he completed that sentence, amazed and delighted at how well he had managed to express something he had wanted to say. If he did not pause for a moment at that point, he is perhaps the only person who has not. In any event, the essay continues in that noble vein.

"... It is not likely that anyone will now see the game of fives played in its perfection for many years to come—for Cavanagh is dead, and has not left his peer behind him.

"It may be said that there are things of more importance than striking a ball against a wall - there are things, indeed, that make more noise and do as little good, such as making war and peace, making speeches and answering them, making verses and blotting them, making money and throwing it away. But the game of fives is what no one despises who has ever played at it. It is the best exercise for the body and the best relaxation for the mind. The Roman poet said that 'Care mounted behind the horseman and stuck to his skirts.' But this remark would not have applied to the fives-player. He who takes to playing at fives is twice young. He feels neither the past nor future 'in the instant.' Debts, taxes, 'domestic treason, foreign levy, nothing can touch him further.' He has no other wish, no other thought, from the moment the game begins, but that of striking the ball, of placing it, of *making* it! This Cavanagh was sure to do. Whenever he touched the ball there was an end of the chase. His eye was certain, his hand fatal, his presence of mind complete. He could do what he pleased, and he always knew what to do. He saw the whole game and played it. . . ."

Hazlitt's essay then goes on to a more detailed appreciation of Cavanagh's skill, his flair for competition his sturdy court personality. It is all so good, it is difficult to resist quoting the piece in its entirety, but for our purposes the excerpted passage is certainly enough and more to introduce some points we would like to make.

First, you can see that over the past century and a half the real meaning and spirit of sports have changed not a whit.



Then, too, if you are acquainted with Hazlitt, you know that for all his frequent brilliance he never wrote better than in his essay on Cavanagh (or, for that matter, than in "The Fight," his other classic piece on a sports subject). Sport, in other words, can stir the complete man as can few other phases of life. When something is right in sport, few things are as beautifully right. A man responds to it with a full heart, even—or should it be *especially*?—a man like Hazlitt, whose thoughts and writing were so often directed to rectifying with cool if annoyed precision what might be termed the errant public-relations appraisals of his age.

Third and last, if other men, in their essays and reports and reminiscences and articles and other types of non-fiction, had approached the standard Hazlitt reaches, there would be far less reason for a collection such as this, which is limited to fiction. The fact of the matter, though, is that down through the years most of the writing on sport that possesses a real staying power has, by and large, taken the form of fiction. With the possible exception of Hazlitt, the greatest sports writer of all time is, very probably, Count Leo Tolstoy. There is an odd pleasure in making a statement such as this, knowing that for most people the name of Tolstoy conjures up anything but the image of the sun playing on green fields and young men afire with the pleasures of the hunt, the shoot, the ride, the walk. Yet the piece in this collection by Tolstoy, an excerpt (mainly on a wolf hunt) from *War and Peace*, makes most of the writing by the celebrated outdoor authors of today seem like the work of city boys.

It would be not only pretentious but untrue, however, to suggest that the really excellent in sports fiction is exclusively found in the pages of the world's acknowledgedly great authors. In this collection, while there are stories by Tolstoy and Hemingway, by Thomas Mann and Arnold Bennett, you will also find a large number of stories by authors whose names ring a softer bell. In a few cases, you will be coming across authors of whom you have possibly never heard—John Taintor Foote, to name just one—and they are responsible for some of the finest pieces in the collection.

In preparing this anthology, the editors had a number of factors to keep in balance. It was important not to have too many old stories and not enough modern ones. We wanted a book which would bring out to some degree the international aspect of sport and yet maintain the proper proportions. For another thing, though we were primarily intent upon securing stories of a certain calibre, we wanted to touch on as many different sports as possible. Finally, we tried to arrive at a good ratio between the romantic and the cynical, the humorous and the

straightaway. It might be remarked at this point that a few selections are not primarily sport stories—that is, the story itself is the thing rather than the sporting element in it. For example, the excerpt from *The Magic Mountain* is barely about skiing, but the hero is on skis and it is such a beautiful story that we would have hated to leave it out, and felt we had just enough justification to include it.

Sport is, of course, an entire world in itself. It has its fretful idols, its unbashful coaches, its wives turned weekend widows, its exploiters and exploited, its learned illiterates—to name only some of the elementary types. They are all here together with the quiet heroes, the Cavanaghs, the men who have always made sport one of the abiding pleasures of life and without whom sport (and the preparation of this collection) would hardly be worth the trouble.

P. S.

H. W. W.



**· Great Stories ·  
from the  
World of Sport**



# HOW OUR VILLAGE BEAT THE AUSTRALIANS

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by HUGH DE SELINCOURT

*At one time or another in his life, every player of games has sat down, eyes half-closed and thoughts a-spinning, and conjured up one glorious afternoon when circumstances combined in a fantastic but perfectly reasonable way and he was able to defeat the world's greatest exponent of his game. If he is, say, a tennis player, he is facing Gonzales and doing surprisingly well: he is profiting nicely from Pancho's inability to take him seriously, to begin with; his serve is giving Gonzales trouble—it is so slow Gonzales cannot handle it. Gonzales drops a crucial game on a footfault but he drops it nevertheless; our underdog continues to move, passing Gonzales cleanly on his backhand because he cannot get his racquet around in time to hit the ball where he was aiming; and so on and on. A fairly large number of these carefully wrought miracles have been produced by sportsmen-writers, but none is really comparable for charm, verisimilitude, and sheer enjoyment to Hugh de Selincourt's celebrated story, "How Our Village beat the Australians." It was just one of those days.*

(TO ARTHUR SOMERSET)

HERE THEY WERE—these great Australians with their unbeaten record—to speak to any of whom by chance even or mistake, in a railway carriage, would have been an unforgettable honour; here they actually were in full strength dressed and ready to play us, stepping about on our own ground—cracking jokes like ordinary men. No wonder our hearts beat, our eyes bulged, our knees weakened, for after all it is one thing to talk of having a go at the Australians and quite another to see them in flesh and blood before you. The thing seemed barely credible. Sam Bird, who always likes to be careful in his statements—never anxious, you understand, to commit himself in any way—said to me as I stood quailing:

"On the whole they're a pretty decent side, I should say; perhaps the strongest side that has ever appeared on a village ground."

"Ah, well, on paper!"—I answered, my natural optimism asserting itself immediately. "And there is always the luck of the game to be taken into account."

"True for you," Sam slowly laughed. "You never know your luck!"

One kept blinking to make quite sure that one's eyes were not playing tricks: but they were not. They were recording plain facts as faithfully as human eyes ever can—which persist, however, in affirming the monotonous rigidity of the earth, against our certain knowledge that it is rushing round the sun in space.

There stood Mr. Armstrong, a little larger even than life, tossing with our Captain. Mr. Armstrong, as always, tossed with great skill, and showed no surprise at winning. He elected to bat without a moment's hesitation, not pausing for a moment to consider the old familiar argument that it is a good thing to know what you have to make before going in to make them. He showed no nervousness of any kind: indeed it was desolating for us to observe the complete confidence that marked the deportment of our visitors. Some of us were cowardly enough to wish that we had left the Australians unchallenged. There was a look too of amusement on the faces of the spectators, who were crowding upon the ground, as though they had left their homes not so much to watch a game of cricket as to see some fun.

Jovial remarks were flung out to us from the safety of the crowded ring - to keep our tails up—to show what we were made of—to remember that no game was lost till it was won. I regret to say they were on the facetious rather than on the encouraging side.

Mr Collins and Mr. Gregory opened the batting to the bowling of Sid Smith and Mr. Gauvinier. Our side was fairly strong, the same indeed, with two exceptions, as that which defeated Raveley. On paper our side did not look much perhaps; on the field, however, there were great possibilities about it.

Sam Bird, asked to give centre to Mr. Collins, could hardly speak or move, but eventually Mr Collins obtained as good a block as he has ever obtained in a Test Match.

The curious happenings, which I shall accurately relate as my eyes beheld them, began immediately. For Sid Smith, bewildered by the occasion, bowled as soon as Sam Bird stood back and a little too soon for Mr. Collins, who was not quite ready. Had this occurred in a Test Match, Mr Collins would undoubtedly have stepped away declining to play the ball, but in this game, as the ball was a full toss, Mr. Collins perhaps opined that he was ready enough to place it out of the ground:

for this he gallantly tried to do, but unfortunately he missed the ball altogether and it hit his middle stump

He looked pardonably and intensely annoyed, Sid and Paul Gauvinier, both real sportsmen, instantly ran up, Sid apologizing and Mr Gauvinier pointing out that the umpire had omitted to cry "Play!" (which was true Sam Bird's lips had indeed moved, but no audible sound had emerged from them) Mr Gauvinier begged Mr Collins to remain where he was, not wishing to take an unfair advantage of any visiting team, in the interests of the game he begged him to stay, and Mr Collins very obligingly consented to do so The ball was considered as a no ball, as though it had never been bowled, and the game was resumed, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, properly begun

Sam Bird found his voice and bravely shouted "Play!" and we all got ready on our toes, taking heart at the mere sight of an Australian wicket broken, however the breaking may have been caused

Now I am a trained observer and was in a position to see what happened next Sid bowled his usual medium-to-slow-paced ball on the off stump, and it was a perfect length Mr Collins played well forward—to drive it, firmly but not hard, past mid-off but the ball, instead of striking the bat, rose, as though bouncing on some invisible substance or lifted by some unseen spirit hand, and, describing a neat half-circle over the shoulder of his bat, hit the centre of the off stump

There was a hush of surprise, then a roar of applause Mr Collins looked at his bat and looked at the wicket and looked at the pitch Mr Collins looked scared He stooped to pick up the ball, he pinched it, he smelt it, as though in doubt of its being a cricket ball at all, then he uttered a deep-felt ejaculation of regret and withdrew towards our pavilion He will worry about that ball as long as he worries about anything, and how it came to bowl him But it was all over, as these tragic and mysterious things always are, in a tiny fraction of a second, and no one exists who can really enlighten us as to their exact nature Even if we happen to be told the truth, we are not able to believe it We are in fact the merest Horatios and there is far, far more in heaven and earth and also on the cricket field than is dreamed of in our philosophies

0—1—0, the score-board read, a familiar, and I may add, under the circumstances, a refreshing sight Our Secretary, Mr John McLeod, walked up to Sid Smith, and told him that it was the finest ball he had ever seen bowled Sid blushed and believed him and hoped that a member of the English Selection Committee was on the ground, and making a note of his name

Mr Armstrong came in next, slow, massive and imperturbable, his



enormous belief in his side and himself towering above the little wanton vagaries of Chance.

"Not a bad ball *that*, I should say!" he remarked cheerfully to Sid, twiddling his bat round in his hand, making it look a funny little instrument for such a great man to be using.

Still thrilled by what my eyes had beheld, I rather hoped that nothing unforeseen would happen to him. Moreover, 0—2—0 on the score-board would really be past a joke, would indeed appear almost blasphemous treatment of our august visitors. The Australian Captain was the Australian Captain, and *l'esc-majesté* is not an empty formula to any but a Communist heart. Perhaps some such thoughts moved Sid, for much to my relief his next ball was a half-volley outside the leg stump which Mr. Armstrong swept gracefully clean out of the ground, narrowly missing a motor that was passing along in the road, its occupants oblivious of who were playing in our field: thus many golden opportunities are missed, as we rush along our modern way at an ever faster pace. Eager small boys found and returned the ball, hopeful of much similar work: but Mr. Armstrong, though his confidence towered above Chance, yet took no liberties with that fickle lady; and played the remaining four balls of the over as any decent first-wicket batsman would have played four good-length balls in his first over.

Tillingfold crossed over, and Mr. Gauvinier started to bowl to Mr. Gregory, and it was clear that Mr. Gregory had the length of the game well in mind, and was determined to waste no time, for the first ball he slashed confidently past cover with such force that it overcame the longish grass and reached the boundary. Two ones followed, confident hard drives which young Mr. Trine flung back from the deep. Mr. Armstrong was backing up with a little more exuberance perhaps than he would have done in a Test Match, suggesting a readiness to play the excellent game of tip-and-run: Mr. Gauvinier bowled a good-length ball on the off stump: Mr. Gregory stepped out and drove it straight back with tremendous force to the bowler, whose hand the ball viciously smacked and then struck the wicket. Unfortunately Mr. Armstrong was a good yard outside his crease and his own umpire was obliged to give him out in response to the yell of appeal that came simultaneously from point, slip, and Mr. Gauvinier, and was taken up immediately from sheer joyous excitement by most of our remaining fieldsmen.

Mr. Armstrong reluctantly withdrew, an illustrious victim of misfortune, and all of us within earshot condoled with him, sincerely, crying out, "Oh, bad luck, sir, bad luck!"

He smiled and remarked without a quaver in his voice, like the great sportsman that he is: "It's all in the game, boys; it's all in the game."

Somehow, we most of us felt guilty, and longed to put him back again at the wicket; but it could not of course be done. Even a great Australian Captain must bow before his fate and the rules of the game.

Mr. Ryder strode in to join Mr. Gregory, and caused considerable amusement to the spectators by hastening to take centre before he realized that he was not to receive the bowling.

Sam Bird started to run from square-leg to the wicket, confident that he and not the famous batsman must be at fault.

He paused half-way and looked wildly round, before returning to his place with his accustomed composure.

Not in the least daunted by the bad start, Mr. Ryder and Mr. Gregory played good free cricket, and it seemed probable that they might make a stand, as the bowling neither of Sid Smith nor of Mr. Gauvinier appeared to trouble them greatly. Twenty was on the score-board; and though Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Collins were out—two useful men to see the back of in any match—signs of uneasiness began to be shown among the Tillingfold team.

Mr. Gregory was lashing good-length balls a little outside the off stump between point and cover; Teddie White was fielding cover and retreated to the boundary by the hedge. Our Secretary, Mr. John McLeod, fearless and short and stout (fearless, that is, of anything but the possible effect of a sudden stoop), was fielding point and came squarer, though the balls seemed generally to have passed him before he was quite aware that they had been hit. He was unaccustomed to the shot and to its pace. Once or twice he had fallen over in a frantic but tardy effort to reach the ball. This had called forth little shouts of laughter from the happy spectators who were not fielding point to Mr. Gregory, and old John McLeod felt that he was somehow being made game of, for a smile was noticeable even upon the courteous face of Mr. Gregory.

I watched this little side-show, as it were, with increasing interest, full of that strained ominous sensation, familiar to us all in dreams, that something startling was about to happen.

Mr. Gregory, with those steel-strong wrists of his, lashed at the ball and hit it a beautiful smack: and I saw Mr. McLeod bounce yards to the right with his arm extended, and his arm seemed to stretch out like a piece of elastic; there was another smack, following the first quickly as two reports from a gun. Mr. McLeod spun completely round and sat quietly down with a dazed look upon his face, holding up the caught ball in his right hand, between his fingers and thumb.

Mr. Gregory had started running, thinking his hit was safely away to Teddie White—the howls and yells of joy at the catch stopped him. He stared at Mr. McLeod, bewildered.

"I caught it all right," our Secretary faltered, and began slowly to rise from his sitting posture "It stuck, you know"

Mr Gregory continued to stare, first at Mr McLeod, then out towards Teddie White, in the direction he was sure the ball had travelled, half suspecting, I believe, that Mr McLeod had played a trick upon him and produced another ball, like a conjurer, from the slack of his breeches

But Mr Gregory, though a little dazed with astonishment, was clear-minded enough to perceive that there was no slack to Mr McLeod's breeches or, indeed, to any other part of his attire, which fitted him like a glove The Australian umpire answered his questioning look with becoming promptness

"Out!" he called, and added to Mr Gauvinier "The most wonderful catch I have ever seen"

Our Secretary quickly recovered from his momentary surprise as we crowded round him, asking him how ever he had managed to bring it off He was so happy that he was on the brink of tears "The sort of catch I've often dreamed of making," he stammered "And now I've done it, bless my soul! Now I've done it and in this game too!"

'We are all inspired once in our lives,' said young Time, who had come hurrying up from the deep

"Inspired! Ah, that's the very word," gasped old John, more breathless than usual "Do you know I was that mad to catch it, I felt lifted up and shoved towards it, and as though my arm had got stretched out three times its natural length at least"

"That's exactly what it looked like, mate," said Sid Smith in solemn tones And to the world at large he added "This is what comes of playing cricket on a Sunday!" a remark which it baffled me to understand, though local people are often superstitious Old John McLeod, I thought, looked hurt But the happy cluster round our honest Secretary broke up as Mr Andrews strode to the wicket, and the catch, like other great events in human existence, became a thing of the past, a thing to be recounted to grandchildren by every person who had seen it, a thing of history, a thing, moreover, so rarely wonderful in itself that it could not possibly be embellished in the telling

24 3-11 Fillingfold were not doing so badly It was clear that they were no longer content to make an exhibition of themselves for the country's sake, they were all out now to make a game of it, forgetting in their enthusiasm and excitement that any batsman on the other side might be considered good enough for at least a hundred If fat old John McLeod could at a pinch hold a catch like that, hang it all! why shouldn't anyone? Thus ran the tenor of their thought

"Does he often do that?" Mr. Andrews asked our stumper pleasantly, as he made his block, smiling.

"Oh, well! Not very often, now," our stumper bashfully replied.

Sid Smith was now bowling with more than his usual unconcern, as though he were at length convinced that he could but do his best and that the outcome of his effort lay in other hands than his. There was something impersonal and aloof about his attitude, and his attitude was perhaps a wise one under the circumstances, though in an ordinary game it might have robbed his bowling of sting and intention. But this, it will be noted, was not an ordinary game.

Of course in cricket, the game being played with a moving ball (sometimes a very swiftly moving ball), things happen so quickly and are over so soon that no one can be quite sure precisely what did happen to any given ball. Thus it is we hear even from experts such divergent accounts of the same stroke. The game, indeed, is wrapped in a cloud of mystery which can never be pierced. Herein lies its fascination. The player feels himself in touch with some hidden power, when, for example, leaping out to his full length the bowler takes and holds a flying ball he can barely see. It is not done by taking thought. The man who has ever held a hot return from his own bowling feels that it has somehow been done for him, and feels grateful; the man who has unaccountably missed a sitter at mid-off, which ninety-nine times out of a hundred he would have held, feels that he has been the victim of a spiteful trick.

On the cricket field we are in touch with powers to which, though we may not be in a position to name and label them, as in this mechanical age we like to name and label everything, it is as well to be respectful. It was natural that in such a game as this these powers should be in special evidence, and it was natural that such a simple, unsophisticated soul as Sid Smith should be specially open to their influence. There was something comic, no doubt, in the dogged perseverance of his bowling, but there was also something very touching in its faithfulness and simplicity.

Now some of us read with surprise that Jack Hobbs, after playing the Australian bowling for a whole day, was bowled on the opening of the second day by a full toss from Mr. Mailey. We had learned at our preparatory schools that a full toss was a good ball to smite. Jack Hobbs himself, however, in the interesting account of the tour which he contributed to a daily newspaper, described himself as being quite content to be out to such a ball, which, we are told, was deceptive in pace, swerved in its flight, hung in the air, and beat him all ends up before bowling him.

I must own to having been sceptical about this until with my own eyes

I saw the ball with which Sid Smith disturbed the wicket of Mr. Ryder. It, too, was a full toss, a slow full toss, which I thought, and Mr. Ryder obviously thought, must reach him knee-high, wide of the wicket on the leg side. But, half-way in its flight, just after Mr. Ryder had turned, his mind, in that fraction of a second during which a batsman unconsciously decided to act, made up, his strength summoned half-way in its flight, I say, the ball miraculously seemed to pause and swerve inwards. Mr. Ryder, observing this, made a superb effort to change his mind, only possible to such a fine batsman as he is, but in spite of his almost super-human quickness of eye and wrist, he was too late; he overbalanced as the ball swerved gently past him and on to the middle stump and neatly saved himself from a fall by the help of his bat. A clumsier man would certainly have fallen.

Mr. Macartney came in next, looking perceptibly worried at the way things were going. A village wicket might be accountable for a great deal, but no wicket could be blamed for disaster caused by a full toss.

There was a business-like look about him, the air of one who without being the least downhearted or inclined to sit upon the splice was yet determined to take no foolish risks. It was evident that he considered the previous batsmen had been victims either of gross ill-luck, like Mr. Armstrong, or of their own folly.

Three runs were made without any untoward incident. Mr. Macartney and his partner seemed to be wondering how four good wickets could have fallen; their voices as they called, to run or not to run, had that settled confidence of men who are ready to go quietly on till their Captain sees fit to declare. But this was not to be.

Mr. Macartney drove Mr. Gauvinier past mid-off into the deep to young Mr. Trine. As the batsmen passed, Mr. Andrews said, "There's another," and there seemed no doubt whatever that there was ample time for a second run.

Mr. Trine was fielding alertly and well—he saw their intention to take a second run; at full speed he picked the ball up and flung it in with such force and accuracy that the middle stump was knocked clean out of the ground. It was fortunate the stump was not broken, as there might have been considerable difficulty in obtaining another: and we never like to ask any side to finish the game with incomplete kit. Mr. Andrews, noticing the amazing velocity of the throw, quickened his pace, but being a good yard outside the crease was forced to retire.

You could not call the piece of work that dismissed him with any justice a fluke. True, Mr. Trine did not usually throw with such pace and accuracy: indeed, he seemed spirited to the ball even as the ball was spirited to the wicket; but most men rise to an occasion once at least

in their lives, and that was the occasion on which Mr Irine rose, nor could he have chosen a better. It is unlikely that he will ever forget that piece of fielding, it is certain that he will never repeat it.

Tillingfold continued to do quite nicely, five wickets were now down for thirty-three. Of course, the Australian tail might wag, though tails rarely did on our own ground, for long.

Now our Captain, Mr Gauvinier, is always mad to win, some people say that he is over-anxious, too keen. He may possibly be, but I think he was wise to remind the side that they had to face some pretty decent bowling. He did not overdo it, as he would have done had he gone on to remind us that on several well-authenticated occasions all ten wickets of a side had fallen without a run being scored. We had all read these lamentable records at the end of Mr Somerset's scorebook, and they had long been present somewhere at the back of most of our minds as a painful possibility, though no one, I am glad to say, had had the indecency to put the horrid thought into words.

Mr Mailey came in quite unabashed by the figures on the scoreboard. By the way he took centre you felt he was going to make things hum. He did. He leaped out at Mr Gauvinier's first ball and hit it full and tremendously hard. I thought it must have gone well into the next field. I was astonished accordingly to hear Mr Gauvinier call out, in a loud commanding voice, "Mine!" I looked up, and there the ball was soaring higher and higher—so high indeed that Mr Mailey and Mr Macartney easily ran two before the ball descended into Mr Gauvinier's safe hands, about a yard and a half behind the umpire. The way in which Mr Gauvinier avoided treading on the wicket was extremely clever.

Tillingfold have always been proud of their fielding. They had certainly never shown to better advantage. "The feller deserves to be out," growled Mr Macartney, "swiping at his first ball in that silly fashion."

Mr Mailey walked jauntily out laughing to himself, pretending bravely, as many another good cricketer has pretended on that sad walk to the pavilion after failing to score—that after all it didn't so very much matter.

Small boys were pacing up and down before the pavilion peering in to catch a glimpse of Mr Armstrong's face—but the features of such a man are under perfect control, and they learned nothing of what was passing behind the cheerful mask within the great man's mind. All captains should strive to acquire this imperturbability of feature, as a rattled skipper is apt to mean a disjointed side. Mr Armstrong's bearing was indeed a lesson to us all. His plan had no doubt been to make a couple of hundred or so for the loss of one or perhaps two wickets, to take tea and then skittle us twice out for twenty or perhaps thirty. But the gods

who preside over cricket had decided otherwise; the unforeseen had happened; and six good wickets were down for thirty-three. Nothing can alter a fact of this kind: each fallen wicket helped to form, like boulders, a horrid little cairn of incontrovertible fact

The remaining Australian batsmen gave us little trouble, and nobody expected that they would. As Sid Smith wisely remarked. "We had 'em on the run," and a side in that condition, as everyone knows, can do nothing right. Our men, on the other hand, did nothing whatever wrong. Every semblance of a catch was held, and some, indeed, that hardly bore any ordinary resemblance to a catch. That, for instance, with which young Mr Trine dismissed Mr McDonald was quite miraculous. The ball, travelling at the deadly breast-high level of a furious drive, seemed well out of reach, but Mr Trine, speeding over the rough ground with the effortless ease of a man moving like a porpoise through water in his dreams, did reach it and he held it superbly in his outstretched hand. Wonderful as the catch was, he never looked like missing it.

The Australian innings closed at thirty-nine—a trebly unlucky number.

There was time for thirty-five minutes' batting before the tea interval at five. It created a very favourable impression that quite a number of the Australian team walked with a hand on the roller, while we rolled the wicket.

Some of us were wondering whether Mr Armstrong, in view of important matches that were to be played during the week, would think it wiser to rest his fast bowlers, in spite of the fact that the wicket would certainly suit them, and distrustful eyes were turned on certain unobtrusive plantains that, do what we would, continued to disfigure the square.

As the roller was shoved up by the hedge I noticed an Eastern gentleman who was staying in the village and was rumoured to be a Tibetan monk of very high grade, left standing alone. He approached each wicket and inspected the stumps, stroking each one gently between his finger and thumb, as though to find out the quality of the material of which they were made. Sam Bird told me that, before the game began, he had asked to be allowed to handle the ball, and Sam had allowed him to do so.

"Ah, how ingenious men are!" he had remarked, as he politely handed the ball back to Sam.

Sam Bird likes to do everything properly. He realized that our visitors were accustomed to play on county grounds where a bell is rung to warn spectators off the ground and to prepare the team for taking the field.

There is no bell on our ground; the umpires stroll out and we follow at our leisure; so thoughtful Sam, afraid that the Australians might be put off their game by the absence of the tintinnabulation to which their ears were accustomed, had brought a small bell, and this he produced from his trouser pocket and shook violently for some moments, standing discreetly, being a shy man, behind the small scoring-box. Then, with some difficulty replacing the bell in his trouser pocket, he joined his colleague and proceeded with a solemn shy smile upon his broad face to the wicket, followed by the Australian team in a laughing, compact body.

Our Secretary, dear old John McLeod,<sup>1</sup> who was going in first and always took first ball, turned a little pale when he saw that Mr. Armstrong, suitably impressed by Tillingfold's magnificent fielding, was setting his field for a fast bowler.

"Oh dear!" he said. "Bless my soul, now. Oh, well. One ball. How I should dearly love to play a ball or two."

"You just stop there till tea," said Mr. Gauvinier pleasantly, patting him on the back. "And we shall be all right."

"It's no good waiting," said Mr. Bois, a preparatory schoolmaster who lived in the village and had played much really good cricket. "Come on. The sound old rules hold good, you know. Keep your eye on the ball and use a nice straight bat."

They made their brave way to the wicket.

Dear old John McLeod must have felt not more than about three inches high, as all alone he faced Mr. McDonald and the ten Australian fieldsmen, placed by a master mind on the exact spot towards which, if he did happen to strike the ball, the ball must certainly fly. Mr. McDonald came thundering along his terrific run to the wicket, a giant with a cannon ball which a man feeling like a midget was to receive with a bat that felt like half a wax match in the midget's grasp. The odds were disproportionate. But our Secretary, all honour to him, gripped the handle of his bat, glued his eye on something he took to be the ball and played the ball.

Its impact on the centre of his bat gave Mr. McLeod such confidence that he grew from a mere midget of a few inches to almost half his full stature as a man. True, he dwindled a little as Mr. McDonald walked leisurely into the outfield preparatory to delivering his next ball, but during the course of the five seconds' sprint to the wicket he had time to grow once more, and once more the ball met the bat, though sooner than Mr. McLeod had expected. This second stroke drew a round of applause from the spectators, confident now that the batsman had taken the measure of the bowling. The next ball, however, missed the bat. Mr.



Oldfield, confident that it must hit the wicket, missed it also and it sped to the boundary for four runs.

Thus Tillingfold's worst fears of dismissal without scoring were allayed. A jubilant smile spread slowly over many of the faces of the team in the pavilion.

"Oh Lord," Horace Cairie muttered, "if we could only beat them!" And he kept doing the sum six sixes are thirty-six in his mind, and wishing it were possible that a bye or a leg-bye could sometimes score six.

The next ball also missed the bat, and missed the wicket. I was standing straight behind the stumps and I was as surprised as Mr. Oldfield and Mr. McDonald at Mr. McLeod's escape. I could have sworn that the top of the wicket faded for that fraction of a second when the ball should have struck it. But there stood the wicket, bails on, unbroken. Mr. Oldfield walked up to the stumps, put both his gloved hands on them, and pressed them, as wicket-keepers sometimes do, backwards and forwards, as though to assure himself that there was no deception.

Mr. McDonald may be pardoned for stamping with vexation when the same thing happened to all the remaining balls of his over except the last, which Mr. McLeod steered with a quick flick of his wrist through a small crowd of slips bang against the pavilion for four.

I did not know that Mr. McLeod kept such a shot in his locker. But it has been well said that good bowling evokes latent powers from a batsman. Mr. Bois was never tired of impressing this upon us when urging us, as he frequently did, to make a point of playing better sides. It was chiefly through his advocacy, as the son of a millionaire who had great influence in Melbourne attended his school, that the game had been arranged.

Mr. Bois played with his usual unruffled composure, though his wicket too was often missed by a miracle. Once the wicket was perceptibly hit and perceptibly trembled, but the bails remained stolidly in their place, and there was nothing wrong with the set of the wicket or with the bails, because Mr. Oldfield tapped the stumps lightly with his finger and the bails dropped lightly off. Their umpire, too, came forward and shook the wicket as Mr. Oldfield had done.

It must have been thankless work for their bowlers, for I suppose our first-wicket batsmen might perhaps be considered mere rabbits to bowlers of their class, and to keep shaving the stumps of a rabbit is distressing to any bowler. Then these men, it must be remembered, had the honour of a great Commonwealth to sustain; and to them therefore these elusive wickets must have been doubly, nay, trebly trying. They clutched their heads, they stamped their feet, they jerked their arms down as though punching imaginary heads: and ever the confidence of

the two batsmen became more bland and smiling, as well it may have done. The way the Australian bowlers stuck to their thankless task commanded our admiration and roused our unstinted applause.

Runs, however, did not come so fast as in the first over. Mr. Oldfield was alert behind the stumps; the small crowd of slips were on their toes: the fielding, though not miraculous, was very good. Ten, however, crept up on the board, and our batsmen would certainly have remained together until the tea interval, had not Mr. Bois, in playing back to Mr. McDonald, unfortunately struck his wicket with his bat. The one blemish to his style is that he is apt to cramp his freedom of movement by making his block unnecessarily far back from the front crease.

11—1—5 the score-board read, and though Tillingfold as a team would have liked to have knocked off the thirty-nine runs without loss, the start could not be described as other than quite satisfactory. Mr. Bois, however, was extremely annoyed. He was quite at home, he said, and could have stayed there for hours, had it not been for his execrable luck.

Young Mr. Trine, who came in next, noticing that Mr. Oldfield was standing well back and that there was no fieldsman in the deep, determined to have a go. As Mr. McDonald was taking his sprint to the wicket he shambled along out of his ground to meet him and, letting madly fly, drove him well out of the ground. A few small boys remained husky for the remainder of the day after the prolonged yell which the fine daring of this hit elicited.

He tried to repeat this manœuvre on the last ball of the over, but he started too soon and got too far out of his ground, so that Mr. McDonald and Mr. Oldfield foresaw his intention and, acting like one man, Mr. McDonald bowled a slow high full toss over Mr. Trine's head into the hands of Mr. Oldfield, who, still on the run, stumped him—a brilliant piece of concerted work between bowler and wicket-keeper.

"Ah!" said Sid Smith sagely, wagging his head. "You dussn't take no liberties with such as they."

During tea, as is usually the case, the strain of the contest was relaxed. The Tillingfold team, especially those who had not yet faced the fast bowlers, seemed to enjoy the honour of eating with their distinguished visitors even more than the honour of playing cricket with them.

Crowds paraded in front of the pavilion, glancing in, as to, many it was quite as thrilling to know how the Australians drank their tea and ate their cake and bread and butter as to watch them bat and bowl. Our visitors showed no surprise at this interest, since the trait is common to the inhabitants of both continents, and were no more put off their food by spectators than they were put off their game by them.

Many of the Tillingfold team, however, unused to the glare of publicity, were painfully affected and, much to the distress of their thoughtful captain, ate and drank next to nothing—comparatively speaking—though the caterer had provided a special tea and had raised the price from ninepence to one shilling.

Punctual to the moment Sam Bird, a cake in his mouth, a pastry in his hand (sensible fellow, his bashfulness had limits), tore himself from the table and producing the little bell from his trouser pocket rang it vigorously, faithful to duty and unheeding the rude remarks of small boys who gathered eagerly about him as he leaned against the small scoring-box.

The umpires went out together. Mr. Armstrong led his men once more into the field, with a look at the score-board, which read 17—2—6. The great game was resumed, Mr. Fanshawe joining our Secretary at the wicket.

Mr. Fanshawe takes his cricket very seriously. He is a religious bat, treating a half-volley or a long hop on the leg with reverence. He was in fact the ideal man to bat first in a Test Match where time is no consideration: during the first week he would have played himself steadily in, and towards the end of the second week he would have begun to make runs, and no one knows how freely he might not have scored as the innings proceeded. But in the Tillingfold games, having always felt hurried, he had never really done himself justice—a born Test Match player in village cricket: another square peg in a round hole. Alas! Life abounds with them.

No doubt Mr. McDonald and Mr. Gregory hoped that, after being refreshed with a cup of tea and a bite of bread and butter, they would be able to hit the wickets; but though they bowled uncommonly well and frequently beat the batsmen the wickets remained intact, as they had done before tea.

In the first half-hour two leg-byes were scored off their bowling; and Mr. Armstrong, feeling that his fast bowlers were expensive and fatiguing themselves to no good purpose, made a double change, going on himself with Mr. Mailey.

Mr. McLeod, never a forcing bat, became infected with Mr. Fanshawe's religious caution, and the atmosphere was so charged with reverence that a run off the bat began to appear like a profanity.

The crowd, at first respectful at the steady resistance to the Australian attack, at last grew restive and disrespectful. Indeed they showed signs of barracking, thinking possibly that it was a mistake to be playing for a draw with twenty-one runs to make to win and more than an hour's time to make them in. They barracked to deaf ears: Mr. McLeod and

Mr. Fanshawe, even had their tenacity of purpose allowed them to hear a sound, were not tight-natured enough to be distracted by popular opinion, much as each loved his fellow man off the cricket ground. Mr. Mailey tried every conceivable wile to tempt Mr. Fanshawe to hit; but Mr. Fanshawe was not to be tempted. Around both batsmen all the fieldsmen clustered in indescribable positions, sillier than silly. But both batsmen were well content to smother every ball that might under ordinary circumstances have hit the wicket, and let all others severely alone. In the second half-hour after tea, one more leg-by-e had been scored. Twenty stood on the scoreboard—it looked with a quarter of an hour to go as though the match must end in a draw.

Big cricket is a game of infinite uncertainty. At last, in desperation, Mr. Andrews, unable to bear it any longer, literally flung himself at Mr. Fanshawe's bat just as the ball struck it, and caught him well within the crease. It looked more like a tackle at Rugby football than a catch at cricket; and Mr. Fanshawe, rather bewildered, appealed against it, but he appealed in vain. The catch was unusual and unorthodox, but he was indubitably out.

Teddie White came in next. Australians or no Australians he came in, as he always came in, at a half-trot, shouldering his bat, to get to business with as little delay as possible. He disliked formalities, leaving them gladly to what he called "the rank and stink."

Mr. Armstrong, caught no doubt after this slow hour in the general assumption that runs were a profanity, or perhaps thinking that the Tillingfold captain had given his men instructions to play for a draw, neglected to replace his field: they were only a little less on the cluster round Teddie White than they had been round Mr. Fanshawe.

Teddie White did not go in for niceties; he didn't bother about the field; it didn't matter to him where they happened to be placed; his one aim in batting was to put the ball out of their reach, out of the ground, much the safest place. But he had a kind heart, and noticing that the fieldsmen were crowded rather nearer to him than they usually were, as Mr. Armstrong bowled, he cried out: "Look out for yourselves then," as he might have done to careless boys at the village net, and lashed it for four.

There was a roar of applause. But Teddie White was not pleased. It was an ass of a shot—all along the ground—he had not properly got hold of it at all—you could never hit a six like that, the only, really safe shot.

Mr. Armstrong much dislikes to be caught napping. He set his master mind to work, sized up his man exactly with one piercing look, and proceeded to dot his men carefully along the leg-side boundary, confident that the next ball would prove this reckless hitter's downfall.

Teddie chafed at the delay, muttering to himself: "If I be dratted fool enough not to beat it over their Aussie 'eads!"

At length, Mr. Armstrong, satisfied with the exact position of his field, swung in his next delivery with a quiet smile of confidence. Teddie White burst at it in mad fury like an explosion; not a muscle, not a nerve in his body but he used for that frenzied blow—the vein on his forehead even bulged, as he smote the ball whizzing over the pavilion.

"That's one on 'em!" he muttered, crumpling off his little cap and rubbing his thick neck with it. "Two more of 'em and we wins—with a few to spare."

Just as some writers, charming gentle fellows to meet, can only become vocal when they are in a thoroughly bad temper with life, so Teddie White could only do himself full justice as a batsman in a mood of concentrated fury, as though it were an outrage that eleven men should band themselves together to do him out of a knock—especially when he never failed to pay his subscription to the club.

The delay in collecting the ball added to his exasperation. Like some sort of inspired fiend he crashed at Mr. Armstrong's next delivery and whanged it over the hedge, over the road and into the garden of a house opposite the ground.

The excitement became delirious. Everyone stood up and shouted and yelled and cheered: men waved their hats, and flung them towards the sky: women waved their scarves and handkerchiefs.

"That's another of 'em," Teddie White muttered, giving his face and neck another vindictive rub with his little cap.

"Well hit, sir, well hit!" said Mr. Armstrong, the sportsman in him never wavering at the most critical moment of any game.

Teddie White glared. He was not to be conciliated by any honeyed words. He growled to himself, "Well 'it! I'll show the blokes well 'it." But his fury was part of his batting rather than of his nature, and he looked very red and very shy and very happy.

There was a hush in the roaring, a stillness among the fluttering, waving apparel, one of those tense moments that last a lifetime as Mr. Armstrong delivered the last ball of his over. Spectators held their breath and stared: the only sound was the puff-puff of a belated traction engine as it slowly passed the ground. No one noticed anything funny in the way Teddie White's little crumpled cap sat balanced upon his square head.

For once in his life Mr. Armstrong was rattled and did not bowl the ball he intended to bowl; the intended half-volley across which Teddie would certainly have hit became a full toss, at which Teddie viciously slashed with all his furious strength; the ball soared a terrific height,

higher and higher; the outfielders hopefully watched it, retreating towards the hedge. Then, as the clamour of joy rose, it began to fall and fell straight down the smoke-vomiting chimney of the belated traction engine.

But what is this that is happening? Mr. Oldfield excitedly appealing! The Australians flocking round the wicket! Could the game not be ours now after such a hit? We were all in consternation—having kept our eyes fixed on the ball. But Teddie in the fury of his last blow had managed to jolt off his little crumpled cap which had impishly floated on to the wicket and now sat perched there even more comfortably than it had before perched on his own square head.

It appears that Teddie, feeling an instant draught on his bald head, had started to snatch his cap from the stumps. To the eternal honour of the Australians they had persuaded him from this rash act, for had he dislodged the bail in removing his cap before the ball had safely landed down the traction engine's chimney he would of course have been out. As it was, he was still in . . .

The whole ground rose and flew at him, the air was thick with fluttering scarves, roaring men, yelling boys, waving arms; even the pavilion rose and streamed like a pennon through the air. The Downs themselves swelled to mountains—the houses capered like lambs, as we carried Teddie White, chanting songs of triumph, through the village High Street.

And I awoke, alone on the Tillingfold Cricket Ground, with a few toddlers playing about, that lovely Sunday afternoon; and walked smiling home to tea.

# FIFTY GRAND

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by ERNEST HEMINGWAY

*No writer is represented more than once in this collection. It was a temptation to make Ernest Hemingway the exception, but an understandable restriction by his publishers limits the reprinting of his work in an anthology to a single appearance. The world of sport is a man's world, and masculinity has always been Hemingway's hallmark. As a result he has written some of his finest stories about bullfighting, big-game hunting, fishing, racing, and pugilism. The Undefeated, My Old Man, or The Snows of Kilimanjaro, among others, would all have been welcome additions to this book, but since the editors had to pick one story, and only one, with little hesitation Fifty Grand was selected. It is Hemingway at his best, which means it is one of the great stories of the language.*

HOW ARE YOU going yourself, Jack?" I asked him.

"You seen this Walcott?" he says.

"Just in the gym."

"Well," Jack says, "I'm going to need a lot of luck with that boy."

"He can't hit you, Jack," Soldier said.

"I wish to hell he couldn't."

"He couldn't hit you with a handful of bird-shot."

"Bird-shot'd be all right," Jack says. "I wouldn't mind bird-shot any."

"He looks easy to hit," I said.

"Sure," Jack says, "he ain't going to last long. He ain't going to last like you and me, Jerry. But right now he's got everything."

"You'll left-hand him to death."

"Maybe," Jack says. "Sure. I got a chance to."

"Handle him like you handled Kid Lewis."

"Kid Lewis," Jack said. "That kike!"

The three of us, Jack Brennan, Soldier Bartlett, and I were in Hanley's. There were a couple of broads sitting at the next table to us. They had been drinking.

"What do you mean, kike?" one of the broads says. "What do you mean, kike, you big Irish bum?"

"Sure," Jack says. "That's it."

"Kikes," this broad goes on. "They're always talking about kikes, these big Irishmen. What do you mean, kikes?"

"Come on. Let's get out of here."

"Kikes," this broad goes on. "Whoever saw you ever buy a drink? Your wife sews your pockets up every morning. These Irishmen and their kikes! Ted Lewis could lick you too."

"Sure," Jack says. "And you give away a lot of things free too, don't you?"

We went out. That was Jack. He could say what he wanted to when he wanted to say it.

Jack started training out at Danny Hogan's health farm over in Jersey. It was nice out there but Jack didn't like it much. He didn't like being away from his wife and the kids, and he was sore and grouchy most of the time. He liked me and we got along fine together; and he liked Hogan, but after a while Soldier Bartlett commenced to get on his nerves. A kidder gets to be an awful thing around a camp if his stuff goes sort of sour. Soldier was always kidding Jack, just sort of kidding him all the time. It wasn't very funny and it wasn't very good, and it began to get to Jack. It was sort of stuff like this. Jack would finish up with the weights and the bag and pull on the gloves.

"You want to work?" he'd say to Soldier.

"Sure. How you want me to work?" Soldier would ask. "Want me to treat you rough like Walcott? Want me to knock you down a few times?"

"That's it," Jack would say. He didn't like it any, though.

One morning we were all out on the road. We'd been out quite a way and now we were coming back. We'd go along fast for three minutes and then walk a minute, and then go fast for three minutes again. Jack wasn't ever what you would call a sprinter. He'd move around fast enough in the ring if he had to, but he wasn't any too fast on the road. All the time we were walking Soldier was kidding him. We came up the hill to the farmhouse.

"Well," says Jack, "you better go back to town, Soldier."

"What do you mean?"

"You better go back to town and stay there."

"What's the matter?"



"I'm sick of hearing you talk."

"Yes?" says Soldier.

"Yes," says Jack.

"You'll be a damn sight sicker when Walcott gets through with you."

"Sure," says Jack, "maybe I will. But I know I'm sick of you."

So Soldier went off on the train to town that same morning. I went down with him to the train. He was good and sore.

"I was just kidding him," he said. We were waiting on the platform.

"He can't pull that stuff with me, Jerry."

"He's nervous and crabby," I said. "He's a good fellow, Soldier."

"The hell he is. The hell he's ever been a good fellow."

"Well," I said, "so long, Soldier."

The train had come in. He climbed up with his bag.

"So long, Jerry," he says. "You be in town before the fight?"

"I don't think so."

"See you then."

He went in and the conductor swung up and the train went out. I rode back to the farm in the cart. Jack was on the porch writing a letter to his wife. The mail had come and I got the papers and went over on the other side of the porch and sat down to read. Hogan came out the door and walked over to me.

"Did he have a jam with Soldier?"

"Not a jam," I said. "He just told him to go back to town."

"I could see it coming," Hogan said. "He never liked Soldier much."

"No. He don't like many people."

"He's a pretty cold one," Hogan said.

"Well, he's always been fine to me."

"Me too," Hogan said. "I got no kick on him. He's a cold one, though."

Hogan went in through the screen door and I sat there on the porch and read the papers. It was just starting to get fall weather and it's nice country there in Jersey, up in the hills, and after I read the paper through I sat there and looked out at the country and the road below against the woods with cars going along it, lifting the dust up. It was fine weather and pretty nice-looking country. Hogan came to the door and I said, "Say, Hogan, haven't you got anything to shoot out here?"

"No," Hogan said. "Only sparrows."

"Seen the paper?" I said to Hogan.

"What's in it?"

"Sande booted three of them in yesterday."

"I got that on the telephone last night."

"You follow them pretty close, Hogan?" I asked.

"Oh, I keep in touch with them," Hogan said.

"How about Jack?" I says. "Does he still play them?"

"Him?" said Hogan. "Can you see him doing it?"

Just then Jack came around the corner with the letter in his hand. He's wearing a sweater and an old pair of pants and boxing shoes.

"Got a stamp, Hogan?" he asks.

"Give me the letter," Hogan said. "I'll mail it for you."

"Say, Jack," I said, "didn't you used to play the ponies?"

"Sure."

"I knew you did. I knew I used to see you out at Sheepshead."

"What did you lay off them for?" Hogan asked.

"Lost money."

Jack sat down on the porch by me. He leaned back against a post. He shut his eyes in the sun.

"Want a chair?" Hogan asked.

"No," said Jack. "This is fine."

"It's a nice day," I said. "It's pretty nice out in the country."

"I'd a damn sight rather be in town with the wife."

"Well, you only got another week."

"Yes," Jack says. "That's so."

We sat there on the porch. Hogan was inside at the office.

"What do you think about the shape I'm in?" Jack asked me.

"Well, you can't tell," I said. "You got a week to get around into form."

"Don't stall me."

"Well," I said, "you're not right."

"I'm not sleeping," Jack said.

"You'll be all right in a couple of days."

"No," says Jack, "I got the insomnia."

"What's on your mind?"

"I miss the wife."

"Have her come out,"

"No. I'm too old for that."

"We'll take a long walk before you turn in and get you good and tired."

"Tired!" Jack says. "I'm tired all the time."

He was that way all week. He wouldn't sleep at night and he'd get up in the morning feeling that way, you know, when you can't shut your hands.

"He's stale as poorhouse cake," Hogan said. "He's nothin'."

"I never seen Walcott," I said.

"He'll kill him," said Hogan. "He'll tear him in two."

"Well," I said, "everybody's got to get it sometime."

"Not like this, though," Hogan said. "They'll think he never trained. It gives the farm a black eye."

"You hear what the reporters said about him?"

"Didn't I! They said he was awful. They said they oughtn't to let him fight."

"Well," I said, "they're always wrong, ain't they?"

"Yes," said Hogan. "But this time they're right."

"What the hell do they know about whether a man's right or not?"

"Well," said Hogan, "they're not such fools."

"All they did was pick Willard at Toledo. This Lardner he's so wise now, ask him about when he picked Willard at Toledo."

"Aw, he wasn't out," Hogan said. "He only writes the big fights."

"I don't care who they are," I said. "What the hell do they know? They can write maybe, but what the hell do they know?"

"You don't think Jack's in any shape, do you?" Hogan asked.

"No. He's through. All he needs is to have Corbett pick him to win for it to be all over."

"Well, Corbett'll pick him," Hogan says.

"Sure. He'll pick him."

That night Jack didn't sleep any either. The next morning was the last day before the fight. After breakfast we were out on the porch again.

"What do you think about, Jack, when you can't sleep?" I said.

"Oh, I worry," Jack says. "I worry about property I got up in the Bronx, I worry about property I got in Florida. I worry about the kids. I worry about the wife. Sometimes I think about fights. I think about that kike Ted Lewis and I get sore. I got some stocks and I worry about them. What the hell don't I think about?"

"Well," I said, "tomorrow night it'll all be over."

"Sure," said Jack. "That always helps a lot, don't it? That just fixes everything all up, I suppose. Sure."

He was sore all day. We didn't do any work. Jack just moved around a little to loosen up. He shadow-boxed a few rounds. He didn't even look good doing that. He skipped the rope a little while. He couldn't sweat.

"He'd be better not to do any work at all," Hogan said. We were standing watching him skip rope. "Don't he ever sweat at all any more?"

"He can't sweat."

"Do you suppose he's got the con? He never had any trouble making weight, did he?"

"No, he hasn't got any con. He just hasn't got anything inside any more."

"He ought to sweat," said Hogan.

Jack came over, skipping the rope. He was skipping up and down in front of us, forward and back, crossing his arms every third time.

"Well," he says. "What are you buzzards talking about?"

"I don't think you ought to work any more," Hogan says. "You'll be stale."

"Wouldn't that be awful?" Jack says and skips away down the floor, slapping the rope hard.

That afternoon John Collins showed up out at the farm. Jack was up in his room. John came out in a car from town. He had a couple of friends with him. The car stopped and they all got out.

"Where's Jack?" John asked me.

"Up in his room, lying down."

"Lying down?"

"Yes," I said.

"How is he?"

I looked at the two fellows that were with John.

"They're friends of his," John said.

"He's pretty bad," I said.

"What's the matter with him?"

"He don't sleep."

"Hell," said John. "That Irishman could never sleep."

"He isn't right," I said.

"Hell," John said. "He's never right. I've had him for ten years and he's never been right yet."

The fellows who were with him laughed.

"I want you to shake hands with Mr. Morgan and Mr. Steinfeld," John said. "This is Mr. Doyle. He's been training Jack."

"Glad to meet you," I said.

"Let's go up and see the boy," the fellow called Morgan said.

"Let's have a look at him," Steinfeld said.

We all went upstairs.

"Where's Hogan?" John asked.

"He's out in the barn with a couple of his customers," I said.

"He got many people out here now?" John asked.

"Just two."

"Pretty quiet, ain't it?" Morgan said.

"Yes," I said. "It's pretty quiet."

We were outside Jack's room. John knocked on the door. There wasn't any answer.

"Maybe he's asleep," I said.

"What the hell's he sleeping in the daytime for?"

John turned the handle and we all went in. Jack was lying asleep on the bed. He was face down and his face was in the pillow. Both his arms were around the pillow.

"Hey, Jack!" John said to him.

Jack's head moved a little on the pillow. "Jack!" John says, leaning over him. Jack just dug a little deeper in the pillow. John touched him on the shoulder. Jack sat up and looked at us. He hadn't shaved and he was wearing an old sweater.

"Christ! Why can't you let me sleep?" he says to John.

"Don't be sore," John says. "I didn't mean to wake you up."

"Oh no," Jack says. "Of course not."

"You know Morgan and Steinfeld," John said.

"Glad to see you," Jack says.

"How do you feel, Jack?" Morgan asks him.

"Fine," Jack says. "How the hell would I feel?"

"You look fine," Steinfeld says.

"Yes, don't I," says Jack. "Say," he says to John. "You're my manager. You get a big enough cut. Why the hell don't you come out here when the reporters was out! You want Jerry and me to talk to them?"

"I had Lew fighting in Philadelphia," John said.

"What the hell's that to me?" Jack says. "You're my manager. You get a big enough cut, don't you? You aren't making me any money in Philadelphia, are you? Why the hell aren't you out here when I ought to have you?"

"Hogan was here."

"Hogan," Jack says. "Hogan's as dumb as I am."

"Soldier Bahtlett was out here wukking with you for a while, wasn't he?" Steinfeld said to change the subject.

"Yes, he was out here," Jack says. "He was out here all right."

"Say, Jerry," John said to me. "Would you go and find Hogan and tell him we want to see him in about half an hour?"

"Sure," I said.

"Why the hell can't he stick around?" Jack says. "Stick around, Jerry."

Morgan and Steinfeld looked at each other.

"Quiet down, Jack," John said to him.

"I better go find Hogan," I said.

"All right, if you want to go," Jack says. "None of these guys are going to send you away, though."

"I'll go find Hogan," I said.

Hogan was out in the gym in the barn. He had a couple of his health-farm patients with the gloves on. They neither one wanted to hit the other, for fear the other would come back and hit him.

"That'll do," Hogan said when he saw me come in. "You can stop the slaughter. You gentlemen take a shower and Bruce will rub you down."

They climbed out through the ropes and Hogan came over to me.

"John Collins is out with a couple of friends to see Jack," I said.

"I saw them come up in the car."

"Who are the two fellows with John?"

"They're what you call wise boys," Hogan said. "Don't you know them two?"

"No," I said

"That's Happy Steinfeld and Lew Morgan. They got a poolroom."

"I been away a long time," I said.

"Sure," said Hogan "That Happy Steinfeld's a big operator."

"I've heard his name," I said.

"He's a pretty smooth boy," Hogan said. "They're a couple of sharpshooters."

"Well," I said. "They want to see us in half an hour."

"You mean they don't want to see us until a half an hour?"

"That's it "

"Come on in the office," Hogan said. "To hell with those sharpshooters."

After about thirty minutes or so Hogan and I went upstairs. We knocked on Jack's door. They were talking inside the room.

"Wait a minute," somebody said.

"To hell with that stuff," Hogan said "When you want to see me I'm down in the office "

We heard the door unlock. Steinfeld opened it

"Come on in, Hogan," he says. "We're all going to have a drink."

"Well," says Hogan. "That's something."

We went in. Jack was sitting on the bed. John and Morgan were sitting on a couple of chairs. Steinfeld was standing up

"You're a pretty mysterious lot of boys," Hogan said.

"Hello, Danny," John says.

"Hello, Danny," Morgan says and shakes hands.

Jack doesn't say anything. He just sits there on the bed. He ain't with the others. He's all by himself. He was wearing an old blue jersey and pants and had on boxing shoes. He needed a shave. Steinfeld and Morgan were dressers. John was quite a dresser too. Jack sat there looking Irish and tough.

Steinfeld brought out a bottle and Hogan brought in some glasses

and everybody had a drink. Jack and I took one and the rest of them went on and had two or three each.

"Better save some for your ride back," Hogan said.

"Don't you worry. We got plenty," Morgan said.

Jack hadn't drunk anything since the one drink. He was standing up and looking at them. Morgan was sitting on the bed where Jack had sat.

"Have a drink, Jack," John said and handed him the glass and the bottle.

"No," Jack said, "I never liked to go to these wakes."

They all laughed. Jack didn't laugh.

They were all feeling pretty good when they left. Jack stood on the porch when they got into the car. They waved to him.

"So long," Jack said.

We had supper. Jack didn't say anything all during the meal except, "Will you pass me this?" or "Will you pass me that?" The two health-farm patients ate at the same table with us. They were pretty nice fellows. After we finished eating we went out on the porch. It was dark early.

"Like to take a walk, Jerry?" Jack asked.

"Sure," I said.

We put on our coats and started out. It was quite a way down to the main road and then we walked along the main road about a mile and a half. Cars kept going by and we would pull out to the side until they were past. Jack didn't say anything. After we had stepped out into the bushes to let a big car go by Jack said, "To hell with this walking. Come on back to Hogan's."

We went along a side road that cut up over the hill and cut across the fields back to Hogan's. We could see the lights of the house up on the hill. We came around to the front of the house and there standing in the doorway was Hogan.

"Have a good walk?" Hogan asked.

"Oh, fine," Jack said. "Listen, Hogan. Have you got any liquor?"

"Sure," says Hogan. "What's the idea?"

"Send it up to the room," Jack says. "I'm going to sleep tonight."

"You're the doctor," Hogan says.

"Come on up to the room, Jerry," Jack says.

Upstairs Jack sat on the bed with his head in his hands.

"Ain't it a life?" Jack says.

Hogan brought in a quart of liquor and two glasses.

"Want some ginger ale?"

"What do you think I want to do, get sick?"

"I just asked you," said Hogan.

"Have a drink?" said Jack.

"No, thanks," said Hogan. He went out.

"How about you, Jerry?"

"I'll have one with you," I said.

Jack poured out a couple of drinks. "Now," he said, "I want to take it slow and easy."

"Put some water in it," I said.

"Yes," Jack said. "I guess that's better."

We had a couple of drinks without saying anything. Jack started to pour me another.

"No," I said, "that's all I want."

"All right," Jack said. He poured himself out another big shot and put water in it. He was lighting up a little.

"That was a fine bunch out here this afternoon," he said. "They don't take any chances, those two."

Then a little later, "Well," he says, "they're right. What the hell's the good in taking chances?"

"Don't you want another, Jerry?" he said. "Come on, drink along with me."

"I don't need it, Jack," I said. "I feel all right."

"Just have one more," Jack said. It was softening him up.

"All right," I said.

Jack poured one for me and another big one for himself.

"You know," he said, "I like liquor pretty well. If I hadn't been boxing I would have drunk quite a lot."

"Sure," I said.

"You know," he said, "I missed a lot, boxing."

"You made plenty of money."

"Sure, that's what I'm after. You know I miss a lot, Jerry."

"How do you mean?"

"Well," he says, "like about the wife. And being away from home so much. It don't do my girls any good. 'Who's your old man?' some of those society kids 'll say to them. 'My old man's Jack Brennan.' That don't do them any good."

"Hell," I said, "all that makes a difference is if they got dough."

"Well," says Jack, "I got the dough for them all right."

He poured out another drink. The bottle was about empty.

"Put some water in it," I said. Jack poured in some water.

"You know," he says, "you ain't got any idea how I miss the wire."

"Sure."

"You ain't got any idea. You can't have an idea what it's like."



"It ought to be better out in the country than in town."

"With me now," Jack said, "it don't make any difference where I am. You can't have an idea what it's like."

"Have another drink."

"Am I getting soused? Do I talk funny?"

"You're coming on all right."

"You can't have an idea what it's like. They ain't anybody can have an idea what it's like."

"Except the wife," I said.

"She knows," Jack said. "She knows all right. She knows. You bet she knows."

"Put some water in that," I said.

"Jerry," says Jack, "you can't have an idea what it gets to be like."

He was good and drunk. He was looking at me steady. His eyes were sort of too steady.

"You'll sleep all right," I said.

"Listen, Jerry," Jack says. "You want to make some money? Get some money down on Walcott."

"Yes?"

"Listen, Jerry," Jack put down the glass. "I'm not drunk now, see? You know what I'm betting on him? Fifty grand."

"That's a lot of dough."

"Fifty grand," Jack says, "at two to one. I'll get twenty-five thousand bucks. Get some money on him, Jerry."

"It sounds good," I said.

"How can I beat him?" Jack says. "It ain't crooked. How can I beat him? Why not make money on it?"

"Put some water in that," I said.

"I'm through after this fight," Jack says. "I'm through with it. I got to take a beating. Why shouldn't I make money on it?"

"Sure."

"I ain't slept for a week," Jack says. "All night I lay awake and worry my can off I can't sleep, Jerry. You ain't got an idea what it's like when you can't sleep."

"Sure."

"I can't sleep. That's all. I just can't sleep. What's the use of taking care of yourself all these years when you can't sleep?"

"It's bad."

"You ain't got an idea what it's like, Jerry, when you can't sleep."

"Put some water in that," I said.

Well, about eleven o'clock Jack passes out and I put him to bed. Finally he's so he can't keep from sleeping. I helped him get his clothes off and got him into bed.

"You'll sleep all right, Jack," I said.

"Sure," Jack says, "I'll sleep now."

"Good night, Jack," I said.

"Good night, Jerry," Jack says. "You're the only friend I got."

"Oh, hell," I said.

"You're the only friend I got," Jack says, "the only friend I got."

"Go to sleep," I said.

"I'll sleep," Jack says.

Downstairs Hogan was sitting at the desk in the office reading the papers. He looked up. "Well, you get your boy friend to sleep?" he asks.

"He's off."

"It's better for him than not sleeping," Hogan said.

"Sure."

"You'd have a hell of a time explaining that to these sport writers though," Hogan said.

"Well, I'm going to bed myself," I said.

"Good night," said Hogan.

In the morning I came downstairs about eight o'clock and got some breakfast. Hogan had his two customers out in the barn doing exercises. I went out and watched them.

"One! Two! Three! Four!" Hogan was counting for them. "Hello, Jerry," he said. "Is Jack up yet?"

"No. He's still sleeping."

I went back to my room and packed up to go in to town. About nine-thirty I heard Jack getting up in the next room. When I heard him go downstairs I went down after him. Jack was sitting at the breakfast table. Hogan had come in and was standing beside the table.

"How do you feel, Jack?" I asked him.

"Not so bad."

"Sleep well?" Hogan asked.

"I slept all right," Jack said. "I got a thick tongue but I ain't got a head."

"Good," said Hogan. "That was good liquor."

"Put it on the bill," Jack says.

"What time you want to go into town?" Hogan asked.

"Before lunch," Jack says. "The eleven o'clock train."

"Sit down, Jerry," Jack said. Hogan went out.

I sat down at the table. Jack was eating a grapefruit. When he'd find a seed he'd spit it out in the spoon and dump it on the plate.

"I guess I was pretty stewed last night," he started.

"You drank some liquor."

"I guess I said a lot of fool things."

"You weren't bad."

"Where's Hogan?" he asked. He was through with the grapefruit.

"He's out in front in the office."

"What did I say about betting on the fight?" Jack asked. He was holding the spoon and sort of poking at the grapefruit with it.

The girl came in with some ham and eggs and took away the grapefruit.

"Bring me another glass of milk," Jack said to her.

She went out.

"You said you had fifty grand on Walcott," I said.

"That's right," Jack said.

"That's a lot of money."

"I don't feel too good about it," Jack said.

"Something might happen."

"No," Jack said. "He wants the title bad. They'll be shooting with him all right."

"You can't ever tell."

"No. He wants the title. It's worth a lot of money to him."

"Fifty grand is a lot of money," I said.

"It's business," said Jack. "I can't win. You know I can't win anyway."

"As long as you're in there you got a chance."

"No," Jack says. "I'm all through. It's just business."

"How do you feel?"

"Pretty good," Jack said. "The sleep was what I needed."

"You might go good."

"I'll give them a good show," Jack said.

After breakfast Jack called up his wife on the long-distance. He was inside the booth telephoning.

"That's the first time he's called her up since he's out here," Hogan said.

"He writes her every day."

"Sure," Hogan says, "a letter only costs two cents."

Hogan said good-by to us and Bruce, the nigger rubber, drove us down to the train in the cart.

"Good-by, Mr. Brennan," Bruce said at the train, "I sure hope you knock his can off."

"So long," Jack said. He gave Bruce two dollars. Bruce had worked on him a lot. He looked kind of disappointed. Jack saw me looking at Bruce holding the two dollars.

"It's all in the bill," he said. "Hogan charged me for the rubbing."

On the train going into town Jack didn't talk. He sat in the corner

of the seat with his ticket in his hatband and looked out of the window. Once he turned and spoke to me.

"I told the wife I'd take a room at the Shelby tonight," he said. "It's just around the corner from the Garden. I can go up to the house tomorrow morning."

"That's a good idea," I said. "Your wife ever see you fight, Jack?"

"No," Jack says. "She never seen me fight."

I thought he must be figuring on taking an awful beating if he doesn't want to go home afterward. In town we took a taxi up to the Shelby. A boy came out and took our bags and we went in to the desk.

"How much are the rooms?" Jack asked.

"We only have double rooms," the clerk says. "I can give you a nice double room for ten dollars."

"That's too steep."

"I can give you a double room for seven dollars."

"With a bath?"

"Certainly."

"You might as well bunk with me, Jerry," Jack says.

"Oh," I said, "I'll sleep down at my brother-in-law's."

"I don't mean for you to pay it," Jack says. "I just want to get my money's worth."

"Will you register, please?" the clerk says. He looked at the name. "Number 238, Mister Brennan."

We went up in the elevator. It was a nice big room with two beds and a door opening into a bathroom.

"This is pretty good," Jack says.

The boy who brought us up pulled up the curtains and brought in our bags. Jack didn't make any move, so I gave the boy a quarter. We washed up and Jack said we better go out and get something to eat.

We ate a lunch at Jimmy Hanley's place. Quite a lot of the boys were there. When we were about half through eating, John came in and sat down with us. Jack didn't talk much.

"How are you on the weight, Jack?" John asked him. Jack was putting away a pretty good lunch.

"I could make it with my clothes on," Jack said. He never had to worry about taking off weight. He was a natural welterweight and he'd never gotten fat. He'd lost weight out at Hogan's.

"Well, that's one thing you never had to worry about," John said.

"That's one thing," Jack says.

We went around to the Garden to weigh in after lunch. The match

was made at a hundred forty-seven pounds at three o'clock. Jack stepped on the scales with a towel around him. The bar didn't move. Walcott had just weighed and was standing with a lot of people around him.

"Let's see what you weigh, Jack," Freedman, Walcott's manager, said.

"All right, weigh *him* then," Jack jerked his head toward Walcott.

"Drop the towel," Freedman said.

"What do you make it?" Jack asked the fellows who were weighing.

"One hundred and forty-three pounds," the fat man who was weighing said.

"You're down fine, Jack," Freedman says.

"Weigh *him*," Jack says.

Walcott came over. He was a blond with wide shoulders and arms like a heavyweight. He didn't have much legs. Jack stood about half a head taller than he did.

"Hello, Jack," he said. His face was plenty marked up.

"Hello," said Jack. "How you feel?"

"Good," Walcott says. He dropped the towel from around his waist and stood on the scales. He had the widest shoulders and back you ever saw.

"One hundred and forty-six pounds and twelve ounces."

Walcott stepped off and grinned at Jack.

"Well," John says to him, "Jack's spotting you about four pounds."

"More than that when I come in, kid," Walcott says. "I'm going to go and eat now."

We went back and Jack got dressed. "He's a pretty tough-looking boy," Jack says to me.

"He looks as though he'd been hit plenty of times."

"Oh, yes," Jack says. "He ain't hard to hit."

"Where are you going?" John asked when Jack was dressed.

"Back to the hotel," Jack says. "You looked after everything?"

"Yes," John says. "It's all looked after."

"I'm going to lie down a while," Jack says.

"I'll come around for you about a quarter to seven and we'll go and eat."

"All right."

Up at the hotel Jack took off his shoes and his coat and lay down for a while. I wrote a letter. I looked over a couple of times and Jack wasn't sleeping. He was lying perfectly still but every once in a while his eyes would open. Finally he sits up.

"Want to play some cribbage, Jerry?" he says.

"Sure," I said.

He went over to his suitcase and got out the cards and the cribbage board. We played cribbage and he won three dollars off me. John knocked at the door and came in.

"Want to play some cribbage, John?" Jack asked him.

John put his hat down on the table. It was all wet. His coat was wet too.

"Is it raining?" Jack asks.

"It's pouring," John says. "The taxi I had got tied up in the traffic and I got out and walked."

"Come on, play some cribbage," Jack says.

"You ought to go and eat."

"No," says Jack. "I don't want to eat yet."

So they played cribbage for about half an hour and Jack won a dollar and a half off him.

"Well, I suppose we got to go eat," Jack says. He went to the window and looked out.

"Is it still raining?"

"Yes."

"Let's eat in the hotel," John says.

"All right," Jack says. "I'll play you once more to see who pays for the meal."

After a little while Jack gets up and says, "You buy the meal, John," and we went downstairs and ate in the big dining room.

After we ate we went upstairs and Jack played cribbage with John again and won two dollars and a half off him. Jack was feeling pretty good. John had a bag with him with all his stuff in it. Jack took off his shirt and collar and put on a jersey and a sweater, so he wouldn't catch cold when he came out, and put his ring clothes and his bathrobe in a bag.

"You all ready?" John asks him. "I'll call up and have them get a taxi."

Pretty soon the telephone rang and they said the taxi was waiting.

We rode down in the elevator and went out through the lobby, and got in a taxi and rode around to the Garden. It was raining hard but there was a lot of people outside on the streets. The Garden was sold out. As we came in on our way to the dressing room I saw how full it was. It looked like half a mile down to the ring. It was all dark. Just the lights over the ring.

"It's a good thing, with this rain, they didn't try and pull this fight in the ball park," John said.

"They got a good crowd," Jack says.

"This is a fight that would draw a lot more than the Garden could hold."

"You can't tell about the weather," Jack says.

John came to the door of the dressing room and poked his head in. Jack was sitting there with his bathrobe on, he had his arms folded and was looking at the floor. John had a couple of handlers with him. They looked over his shoulder. Jack stood up.

"Is he in?" he asked.

"He's just gone down," John said.

We started down. Walcott was just getting into the ring. The crowd gave him a big hand. He climbed through between the ropes and put his two fists together and smiled, and shook them at the crowd, first at one side of the ring, then at the other, and then sat down. Jack got a good hand coming down through the crowd. Jack is Irish and the Irish always get a pretty good hand. An Irishman don't draw in New York like a Jew or an Italian but they always get a good hand. Jack climbed up and bent down to go through the ropes and Walcott came over from his corner and pushed the rope down for Jack to go through. The crowd thought that was wonderful. Walcott put his hand on Jack's shoulder and they stood there just for a second.

"So you're going to be one of these popular champions," Jack says to him. "Take your goddam hand off my shoulder."

"Be yourself," Walcott says.

This is all great for the crowd. How gentlemanly the boys are before the fight. How they wish each other luck.

Solly Freedman came over to our corner while Jack is bandaging his hands and John is over in Walcott's corner. Jack puts his thumb through the slit in the bandage and then wrapped his hand nice and smooth. I taped it around the wrist and twice across the knuckles.

"Hey," Freedman says. "Where do you get all that tape?"

"Feel of it," Jack says. "It's soft, ain't it? Don't be a hick."

Freedman stands there all the time while Jack bandages the other hand, and one of the boys that's going to handle him brings the gloves and I pull them on and work them around.

"Say, Freedman," Jack asks, "what nationality is this Walcott?"

"I don't know," Solly says. "He's some sort of a Dane."

"He's a Bohemian," the lad who brought the gloves said.

The referee called them out to the center of the ring and Jack walks out. Walcott comes out smiling. They met and the referee put his arm on each of their shoulders.

"Hello, popularity," Jack says to Walcott.

"Be yourself."

"What do you call yourself 'Walcott' for?" Jack says. "Didn't you know he was a nigger?"

"Listen—" says the referee, and he gives them the same old line.

Once Walcott interrupts him. He grabs Jack's arm and says, "Can I hit when he's got me like this?"

"Keep your hands off me," Jack says. "There ain't no moving pictures of this."

They went to their corners. I lifted the bathrobe off Jack and he leaned on the ropes and flexed his knees a couple of times and scuffed his shoes in the rosin. The gong rang and Jack turned quick and went out. Walcott came toward him and they touched gloves and as soon as Walcott dropped his hands Jack jumped his left into his face twice. There wasn't anybody ever boxed better than Jack. Walcott was after him, going forward all the time with his chin on his chest. He's a hooker and he carries his hands pretty low. All he knows is to get in there and sock. But every time he gets in there close, Jack has the left hand in his face. It's just as though it's automatic. Jack just raises the left hand up and it's in Walcott's face. Three or four times Jack brings the right over but Walcott gets it on the shoulder or high up on the head. He's just like all these hookers. The only thing he's afraid of is another one of the same kind. He's covered everywhere you can hurt him. He don't care about a left-hand in his face.

After about four rounds Jack has him bleeding bad and his face all cut up, but every time Walcott's got in close he's socked so hard he's got two big red patches on both sides just below Jack's ribs. Every time he gets in close, Jack ties him up, then gets one hand loose and uppercuts him, but when Walcott gets his hands loose he socks Jack in the body so they can hear it outside in the street. He's a socker.

It goes along like that for three rounds more. They don't talk any. They're working all the time. We worked over Jack plenty too, in between the rounds. He don't look good at all but he never does much work in the ring. He don't move around much and that left-hand is just automatic. It's just like it was connected with Walcott's face and Jack just had to wish it in every time. Jack is always calm in close and he doesn't waste any juice. He knows everything about working in close too and he's getting away with a lot of stuff. While they were in our corner I watched him tie Walcott up, get his right hand loose, turn it and come up with an uppercut that got Walcott's nose with the heel of the glove. Walcott was bleeding bad and leaned his nose on Jack's shoulder so as to give Jack some of it too, and Jack sort of lifted his shoulder sharp and caught him against the nose, and then brought down the right hand and did the same thing again.

Walcott was sore as hell. By the time they'd gone five rounds he hated Jack's guts. Jack wasn't sore; that is, he wasn't any sorer than he always was. He certainly did used to make the fellows he fought



hate boxing That was why he hated Kid Lewis so He never got the Kid's goat Kid Lewis always had about three new dirty things Jack couldn't do Jack was as safe as a church all the time he was in there, as long as he was strong He certainly was treating Walcott rough The funny thing was it looked as though Jack was an open classic boxer. That was because he had all that stuff too

After the seventh round Jack says, "My left's gettin' heavy "

From then he started to take a beating It didn't show at first But instead of him running the fight it was Walcott was running it, instead of being safe all the time now he was in trouble He couldn't keep him out with the left hand now It looked as though it was the same as ever, only now instead of Walcott's punches just missing him they were just hitting him He took an awful beating in the body

"What's the round?" Jack asked

"The eleventh "

"I can't stay " Jack says " My legs are going bad "

Walcott had been just hitting him for a long time It was like a baseball catcher pulls the ball and takes some of the shock off From now on Walcott commenced to land solid He certainly was a socking-machine Jack was just trying to block everything now It didn't show what an awful beating he was taking In between the rounds I worked on his legs The muscles would flutter under my hands all the time I was rubbing them He was sick as hell

"How's it go?" he asked John, turning around, his face all swollen.

"It's his fight

"I think I can last," Jack says "I don't want this bohunk to stop me "

It was going just the way he thought it would He knew he couldn't beat Walcott He wasn't strong any more He was all right though His money was all right and now he wanted to finish it off right to please himself He didn't want to be knocked out

The gong rang and we pushed him out He went out slow Walcott came right out after him Jack put the left in his face and Walcott took it, came in under it and started working on Jack's body Jack tried to tie him up and it was just like trying to hold on to a buzz saw Jack broke away from it and missed with the right Walcott clipped him with a left-hook and Jack went down He went down on his hands and knees and looked at us The referee started counting Jack was watching us and shaking his head At eight John motioned to him You couldn't hear on account of the crowd Jack got up The referee had been holding Walcott back with one arm while he counted

When Jack was on his feet Walcott started toward him

"Watch yourself, Jimmy," I heard Solly Freedman yell to him.

Walcott came up to Jack looking at him. Jack stuck the left hand at him. Walcott just shook his head. He backed Jack up against the ropes, measured him and then hooked the left very light to the side of Jack's head and socked the right into the body as hard as he could sock, just as low as he could get it. He must have hit him five inches below the belt. I thought the eyes would come out of Jack's head. They stuck way out. His mouth come open.

The referee grabbed Walcott. Jack stepped forward. If he went down there went fifty thousand bucks. He walked as though all his insides were going to fall out.

"It wasn't low," he said. "It was an accident."

The crowd were yelling so you couldn't hear anything.

"I'm all right," Jack says. They were right in front of us. The referee looks at John and then he shakes his head.

"Come on, you polak son-of-a-bitch," Jack says to Walcott.

John was hanging onto the ropes. He had the towel ready to chuck in. Jack was standing just a little way out from the ropes. He took a step forward. I saw the sweat come out on his face like somebody had squeezed it and a big drop went down his nose.

"Come on and fight," Jack says to Walcott.

The referee looked at John and waved Walcott on.

"Go in there, you slob," he says.

Walcott went in. He didn't know what to do either. He never thought Jack could have stood it. Jack put the left in his face. There was such a hell of a lot of yelling going on. They were right in front of us. Walcott hit him twice. Jack's face was the worst thing I ever saw—the look on it! He was holding himself and all his body together and it all showed on his face. All the time he was thinking and holding his body in where it was busted.

Then he started to sock. His face looked awful all the time. He started to sock with his hands low down by his side, swinging at Walcott. Walcott covered up and Jack was swinging wild at Walcott's head. Then he swung the left and it hit Walcott in the groin and the right hit Walcott right bang where he'd hit Jack. Way low below the belt. Walcott went down and grabbed himself there and rolled and twisted around.

The referee grabbed Jack and pushed him toward his corner. John jumps into the ring. There was all this yelling going on. The referee was talking with the judges and then the announcer got into the ring with the megaphone and says, "Walcott on a foul."

The referee is talking to John and he says, "What could I do? Jack

wouldn't take the foul. Then when he's groggy he fouls him."

"He'd lost it anyway," John says.

Jack's sitting on the chair. I've got his gloves off and he's holding himself in down there with both hands. When he's got something supporting it his face doesn't look so bad.

"Go over and say you're sorry," John says into his ear. "It'll look good."

Jack stands up and the sweat comes out all over his face. I put the bathrobe around him and he holds himself in with one hand under the bathrobe and goes across the ring. They've picked Walcott up and they're working on him. There're a lot of people in Walcott's corner. Nobody speaks to Jack. He leans over Walcott.

"I'm sorry," Jack says. "I didn't mean to foul you."

Walcott doesn't say anything. He looks too damned sick.

"Well, you're the champion now," Jack says to him. "I hope you get a hell of a lot of fun out of it."

"Leave the kid alone," Solly Freedman says.

"Hello, Solly," Jack says. "I'm sorry I fouled your boy."

Freedman just looks at him.

Jack went to his corner walking that funny jerky way and we got him down through the ropes and through the reporters' tables and out down the aisles. A lot of people want to slap Jack on the back. He goes out through all that mob in his bathrobe to the dressing room. It's a popular win for Walcott. That's the way the money was bet in the Garden.

Once we got inside the dressing room Jack lay down and shut his eyes.

"We want to get to the hotel and get a doctor," John says.

"I'm all busted inside," Jack says.

"I'm sorry as hell, Jack," John says.

"It's all right," Jack says.

He lies there with his eyes shut.

"They certainly tried a nice double-cross," John said.

"Your friends Morgan and Steinfeldt," Jack said. "You got nice friends."

He lies there, his eyes are open now. His face has still got that awful drawn look.

"It's funny how fast you can think when it means that much money," Jack says.

"You're some boy, Jack," John says.

"No," Jack says. "It was nothing."

# THE GRAND NATIONAL

*from*

NATIONAL VELVET

by ENID BAGNOLD

*Our tender memories of National Velvet were of a book charged with excitement and emotion, all about a young girl who wanted above all else to be the best rider in England, who won a pinto in a raffle for a shilling and went on to ride it in the Grand National. It turned out upon rereading that the book was just as appealingly romantic as we expected but that it was much more about rural family life than we recalled. It is not essentially a sports book except for this moving excerpt—the big scene of the running of the Grand National with Velvet Brown masquerading as James Task, Russian rider astride the big pinto.*

THIS WAS the North with its everlasting white railings. The Stands were filling already. The Union Jack, Stars and Stripes and Tricolor flew over the grandstand. The minor bookies under their stand-umbrellas had been in position since eleven. Their fantastic names were chalked on boards so that they looked like a fresh haul of fish in a market. "Special this Day! . . . Bream . . . Ernie Bream . . . Alfie Haddock . . . Mossie Halibut . . . Duke Cod!" They were shouting and clattering and taking turns in gangs at the Snack Bar. Everything else was more or less awaiting the glory of the day.

"Champagne Bar . . . Champagne only" This was empty Inside the dining room the white tables were spread and the knowing old waiters hung like old flies swarming in doorways

The police had marched out in a dark stream an hour before and had taken up positions round the course There was a constable at every jump with a folded stretcher laid beside him, its rug within its folds Each man had a red flag and a yellow flag with which to call his neighbor

The Public was flowing in like a river

The whole course was blackening on the rim like a lake that has thrown up seaweed upon its banks It had been black since daylight, but the seaweed was deepening and deepening the truckway was solid with life the ten-shilling stand at the Canal Turn was groaning, the Melling Road, which crossed the course, from being an ivory band across the green became an ebony Great passenger airplanes hummed over the stands and made their descent A foreign king and queen arrived in Lord Sefton's box

Tattersalls was like a thawed ice rink Pools had long appeared over the course Thousands and thousands of people were wet but not yet to the skin And they hardly felt it

The changing room for jockeys was warm and gay like a busy nursery Jockeys' valets with the air of slightly derelict family butlers had been ironing in their shirt sleeves since seven in the morning Two large coal fires behind nursery wire guards were burning briskly, and over the guards hung strips of color Gypsy silks were all across the long tables stretched down the middle, and the valets ironed and pressed and swore and grunted and cleaned soft boots and hunted for odds and ends in their enormous suitcases, the traveling houses of their livelihood Down one side of the room hung little saddles, touching little saddles Below them saddlecloths, numnahs, girths Below them on the boot boxes countless little boots Brown boots with black tops so soft you could hardly walk in them Boots like gloves that are drawn on or a child's ankle and filled out with a child's toes Boots as touching as the saddles

Outside in the weighing room the hooded scales had been uncloaked and the Clerk of the Scales was already at his desk The declaration counter had its pens and inks and its stacks of empty forms waiting to be filled

In the hospitable room the nurse put a few more coals, delicately with her coal pincers, onto the bright fire

While the second race was being run Mi signed "Michael Taylor" at the foot of his declaration card, and paused a second higher up the card. "James Tasky" he wrote firmly. Then filled in the horse's name. He blotted the card and passed it into the box.

Then he went back to a little haunt of his.

"Now . . ." he said, half an hour later, crooking his finger in the doorway, and the little man picked up his suitcase and followed him.

"I'll take that," said Mi huskily.

Mi hustled the little man in past the unsaddling enclosure to the holy stillness of the weighing room, and through the swing door into a corner of the changing room, pushing him down on a boot box overshadowed by hanging garments.

"They're nak. . ." gasped the little man, sitting down.

"Tscht!" muttered Mi, standing over him.

The jockeys' valets bustled here and there, grumbled, stumbled, fell over boots. Two of their charges with hard red faces and snowy bodies were standing naked by the nursery fireguard. Mi looked grimly down at the little man.

"Keep yer eyes on yer knees," he muttered fiercely. And knelt to hold up the white breeches he had fished out of the suitcase.

"Who's your lady friend!" said one of the naked midgets, turning round to warm his other buttock.

"Miss Tasky. From Russia," said Mi without a flicker.

"Speak English?" said the midget, turning again like a chicken on a spit.

"No use wasting any dope on him," said Mi. "Can't speak a bloody word. He's a Bolshie they've serft over To pick the winnings!"

"You sim to be doing the lady friend to the lady friend all right?"

"Doin' what I'm paid for," said Mi. "Times are ugly down South. I on'y jus' come up."

"Well, of all the muck-rakin' cheek," said the other naked midget, scratching his stomach . . . "that's that Tasky's riding that out-a-condition, pot-bellied whisky horse I saw brought in last night. Turnin' the Gran' National into a bloody circus!" and he cracked the end bone of his index finger like a pistol shot.

"Come on, Bibby, get dressed, do," begged an austere butler. "Going to ride the National in your pink skin?"

As Bibby turned away Tasky stood up gently, black, pink sleeves, black cap, white breeches, little black boots, brown tops. Mi pulled the saddle, saddlecloth and numnah off the iron bracket. "Sit down

an' wait," he said loudly as to a foreigner, pushed him back on the boot box and stood over him.

Then, on the door opening, "They want you for the chair," he said.

"Thought he didn't understand English," said a voice.

"No reason why 'e shouldn't begin," said Mi. "CHAIR I said," he yelled into Tasky's ear. "Come on!"

Outside in the weighing room all was quiet and regulated. "That's a toff," thought Mi, seeing a tall man get off the chair.

He was obviously a gentleman rider, a "bumper."

"Weight?" said the Clerk of the Scales.

"Ten seven, near enough," said Mi. "He don't speak no English, sir. Russian."

Mi pushed the little man toward the scales. "Sit, can't you," he said in a hoarse whisper. "Double up!"

Tasky sat in the chair and nursed his saddle.

"Ten six and eleven," said the Clerk's assistant.

"Penny piece," said the Clerk quietly, and dropped a small piece of lead into the weight flap

"An' a half," said the Clerk. In went another piece. The Clerk wrote carefully in his book.

"Get off," hissed Mi. Tasky never budged.

Mi gave him a pull. "Job, sir, this is," he said. "Seems more a nitwit than . . ." He hustled the little man out of the room, throwing his brown overcoat round his shoulders.

"Who's that?" said someone, opening the door of the stewards' room

"The Russian, sir," said the Clerk of the Scales, looking up at the Clerk of the Course.

The heavy, streaming daylight broke on them. The worst for Mi was over, the worst for Velvet to come.

"Keep in the crowd," said Mi. "I got to go for the horse. Keep movin'. Don't come out into the open. Don't rush at the horse when you see me lead him out. I got to go roun' and roun'. Wait till you see the others walk into the paddock . . ."

"Paddock?"

"Rails There Walk straight up to near me and stand by the bushes in the middle. I'll lead him up to you. I'll jump you up."

"Jump me up?"

"Jump you. I gotta take yer knee an' jump you. Like the horse was too high fer you to get on. I'll take yer coat and I'll lead you out an' that's all I can do for you."

"You going now?" said Velvet, small, small in voice.

"I'm going. An' I got togs. You'll see. White leading reia an' all. Borrowed 'em off a head lad, friend o' mine."

Mi was gone and Velvet drifted through the crowd.

But suddenly Mi was back again. "Keep your eyes skinned an' keep AWAY from everyone who'll talk!" he hissed, and was gone again.

The crowd buzzed round the Tote, and many looked curiously at Velvet's black cap and bony childish face. She was not unlike an apprentice lad.

The horses were parading in the paddock. There came The Piebald. Velvet stared at him in shivering appreciation. He wore borrowed clothes with a knotted yellow rope bumping on his quarters. Mi led him with a white leading rein, wide like a tape. The number 4 was tied on Mi's left arm. As he came into the paddock a buzz came from the crowd and here and there laughter. Round and round went the horses, and the rain down Velvet's neck.

Suddenly she saw the little men go in. Wide shoulders, gay caps and little feet. She walked forward, entered the paddock, and went straight to the bushes. There was a pause. The horses circled. Every jockey went up to his owner. She alone had no one. She stood firm and looked around her, conscious that this was her worst moment today.

Then up came Mi with The Piebald. She stripped her coat off and he held it on his arm, pulled the rugs off the horse onto his shoulder, stooped to her left leg and flung her up into the saddle. Almost at once the horses moved away, Mi walking beside her to the gate.

She was quite definite, quite easy. Now it was over, the creeping like a thief, the doubts, the waiting. No one would stop her now. The worst moments had come and gone, and there could be no doubt at all that now she and The Piebald were in together for the Grand National.

"There . . . I never told you," said Mi, low and hoarse, walking beside her. "Don't lie up on his neck! But it's too late now . . ."

"Ssh," said Velvet, looking straight ahead of her at something that seemed like a crane upon a raised embankment.

"I'll not 'ssh!' " said Mi, his heart bursting. "I'll say 'Think of yer ma!'"

He snipped off the leading rein by its chromium hook and The Piebald swung through the gate.



"Gawd . . . a'might . . ." said Mi, struck short. "I never told her to ride down in front of the stands before going to the post . . ."

But for Velvet it was only follow-my-leader. She went down easily with the other horses, turned, stood slightly in her saddle, and galloped back. Mi started running for the truckway. "I'll never make Becher's . . . not in this crowd. Not unless there's a muck-up at the post."

Just ahead of him, turning out from the stable-roadway, came the black motor ambulance, with the doctor sitting sideways in the back, looking at a paper. Behind the ambulance, from the same turning, crawled out a sinister, square-bottomed coffin, a knacker's cart, drawn by an enormous pigeon-chested shire horse. Ahead of the ambulance, and blocking the way, went the horse ambulance, with its crane, drawn by two shire horses in tandem. All made their way to Becher's. Another knacker's cart was trundling along far away by Valentine's and yet another pushed its way in Melling Road.

"Black slugs . . ." said Mi, running panting pushing

"

At the post the twenty horses were swaying like the sea. Forward . . . No good! Back again. Forward . . . No good! Back again.

The line formed . . . and rebroke. Waves of the sea. Drawing a breath . . . breaking. Velvet fifth from the rail, between a bay and a brown. The starter had long finished his instructions. Nothing more was said aloud but low oaths flew, the cursing and grumbling flashed like a storm. An eye glanced at her with a look of hate. The breaking of movement was too close to movement to be borne. It was like water clinging to the tilted rim of the glass like the sound of the dreaded explosion after the great shell has fallen. The will to surge forward overlaid by something delicate and terrible and strong human obedience at bursting point but not broken. Horses' eyes gleamed openly men's eyes set like chips of steel. Rough man, checked in violence, barely master of himself, barely master of his horse. The Piebald ominously quiet and nothing coming from him . . . up went the tape.

The green course poured in a river before her as she lay forward, and with the plunge of movement sat in the stream.

"Black slugs . . ." said Mi cursing under his breath, running, dodging, suffocated with the crowd. It was the one thing he had overlooked, that the crowd was too dense ever to allow him to reach Becher's in the time. Away up above him was the truck line his once-glorious free seat, separated from him by a fence. "God's liver . . ."

he mumbled, his throat gone cold, and stumbled into an old fool in a mackintosh. "Are they off?" he yelled at the heavy crowd as he ran, but no one bothered with him.

He was cursed if he was heeded at all. He ran, gauging his position by the cranes on the embankment. Velvet coming over Becher's in a minute and he not there to see her. "They're off." All around him a sea of throats offered up the gasp.

He was opposite Becher's but could see nothing: the crowd thirty deep between him and the course. All around fell the terrible silence of expectancy. Mi stood like a rock. If he could not see then he must use his ears, hear. Enclosed in the dense, silent, dripping pack he heard the thunder coming. It roared up on the wet turf like the single approach of a multiple-footed animal. There were stifled exclamations, grunts, thuds. Something in the air flashed and descended. The first over Becher's! A roar went up from the crowd, then silence. The things flashing in the air were indistinguishable. The tip of a cap exposed for the briefest of seconds. The race went by like an express train and was gone. Could Velvet be alive in that?

Sweat ran off Mi's forehead and into his eyes. But it was not sweat that turned the air gray and blotted out the faces before him. The ground on all sides seemed to be smoking. An extraordinary mist, like a low prairie fire, was formed in the air. It had dwelt heavily all day behind the Canal, but the whole of the course had remained clear till now. And now, before you could turn to look at your neighbor, his face was gone. The mist blew in shreds, drifted, left the crowd clear again but hid the whole of the Canal Corner, fences, stand and horses.

There was a struggle going on at Becher's; a horse had fallen and was being got out with ropes. Mi's legs turned to water and he asked his neighbor gruffly. "Who's fallen?" But the neighbor, straining to the tip of his toes, and glued to his glasses, was deaf as lead.

Suddenly Mi lashed round him in a frenzy. "Who's fallen, I say? Who's hurt!"

"Steady on," said a little man whom he had prodded in the stomach.

"Who's fallen?" said Mi desperately. "I gotta brother in this . . ."

"It's his brother!" said the crowd all around him. "Let him through."

Mi was pushed and pummeled to the front and remained embedded two from the front line. The horse that had fallen was a black horse, its neck unnaturally stretched by the ropes that were hauling it from the ditch.

There was a shout and a horse, not riderless, but ridden by a tugging, cursing man, came galloping back through the curling fumes of the mist, rolled its wild eye at the wrong side of Becher's and disappeared away out of the course. An uproar began along the fringes of the crowd and rolled back to where Mi stood. Two more horses came back out of the mist, one riderless. The shades of others could be discerned in the fog. Curses rapped out from unseen mouths.

"What's happened at the Canal Turn? What's wrong down at the Turn?"

"The whole field!" shouted a man. The crowd took it up.

"The field's out. The whole field's come back. There's no race!" It was unearthly. Something a hundred yards down there in the fog had risen up and destroyed the greatest steeplechase in the world.

Nineteen horses had streamed down to the Canal Turn, and suddenly, there across the course, at the boundary of the fog, four horses appeared beyond Valentines, and among them, fourth, was The Piebald.

"Yer little lovely, yer little lovely," yelled Mi, wringing his hands and hitting his knees. "It's her, it's him, it's me brother!"

No one took any notice. The scene immediately before them occupied all the attention. Horses that had fallen galloped by riderless, stirrups flying from their saddles, jockeys returned on foot, covered with mud, limping, holding their sides, some running slowly and miserably over the soggy course, trying to catch and sort the horses.

"It's Yellow Messenger," said a jockey savagely, who had just seized his horse. "Stuck on the fence down there and kicking hell." And he mounted.

"And wouldn't they jump over him?" called a girl shrilly.

"They didn't want'er hurt the por thing, lady," said the jockey, grinning through his mud, and rode off.

"Whole lot piled up and refused," said a man who came up the line. "Get the course clear now, quick!"

"They're coming again!" yelled Mi, watching the galloping four. "Get the course clear! They'll be coming!"

They were out of his vision now, stuck down under Becher's high fence as he was. Once past Becher's on the second round would he have time to extricate himself and get back to the post before they were home? He stood indecisively and a minute went by. The course in front of him was clear. Horses and men had melted. The hush of anticipation began to fall. "They're on the tan again," said a single voice. Mi flashed to a decision. He could not afford the minutes to be

at Becher's. He must get back for the finish and it would take him all his time. He backed and plunged and ducked, got cursed afresh. The thunder was coming again as he reached the road and turned to face the far-off stands. This time he could see nothing at all, not even a cap in the air. "What's leading? What's leading?"

"Big brown. Tantibus, Tantibus. Tantibus leading."

"Where's The Piebald?"

"See that! Leonora coming up . . ."

They were deaf to his frantic questions. He could not wait, but ran. The mist was ahead of him again, driving in frills and wafting sedgily about. Could Velvet have survived Becher's twice? In any case no good wondering. He couldn't get at her to help her. If she fell he would find her more quickly at the hospital door than struggle through the crowd and be forbidden the now empty course.

Then a yell. "There's one down!"

"It's the Yank mare!"

The horse ambulance was trundling back with Yellow Messenger from the Canal Turn. Mi leapt for a second onto the turning hub of the wheel and saw in a flash, across the momentarily mist-clear course, the pride of Baltimore in the mud underneath Valentine's. The Piebald was lying third. The wheel turned and he could see no more. Five fences from the finish; he would not allow himself to hope, but ran and ran. How far away the stands in the gaps of the mist as he pushed, gasping, through the people. Would she fall now? What had he done, bringing her up here? But would she fall now? He ran and ran.

"They're coming on to the racecourse . . . coming on to the racecourse . . ."

"How many?"

"Rain, rain, can't see a thing."

"How many?"

Down sank the fog again, as a puff of wind blew and gathered it together. There was a steady roaring from the stands, then silence, then a hubbub. No one could see the telegraph.

Mi, running, gasped, "Who's won?"

But everyone was asking the same question. Men were running, pushing, running, just as he. He came up to the gates of Melling Road, crossed the road on the fringe of the tan, and suddenly, out of the mist, The Piebald galloped riderless, lolling unsteadily along, reins hanging, stirrups dangling. Mi burst through onto the course, his heart wrung.

"Get back there!" shouted a policeman. "Loose horse!"

"Hullo, Old Pie there!" shouted Mi. The animal, soaked, panting, spent, staggered and slipped and drew up.

"What've you done with 'er?" said Mi, weeping, and bent down to lift the hoof back through the rein. "You let 'er down, Pie? What in God's sake?" He led the horse down the course, running, his breath catching, his heart thumping, tears and rain on his face.

Two men came toward him out of the mist.

"You got him?" shouted one. "Good fer you. Gimme!"

"You want him?" said Mi, in a stupor, giving up the rein.

"Raised an objection. Want him for the enclosure. Chap come queer."

"Chap did? What chap?"

"This here's the winner' Where you bin all day, Percy?"

"Foggy," said Mi. "Very foggy. Oh, my God!"

Back in the fog a voice had spoken into a telephone. It had need only to say one word. All else had been written out beforehand. And in that very second in the offices of the Associated Press in New York men had taken off the message

"Urgent Associated New York flash Piebald wins." The one word the voice had said into the fog was "Piebald."

Up went the red flag. The crowd buzzed. "What is it?" "Did he fall?"

"Must've hurt hisself jumping . . ."

"Fainted."

"Jus' dismounted, the silly b . . ."

Dismounted before reaching the unsaddling enclosure. Objection. Up went the red flag. There was tenseness along the line of private bookies, pandemonium in the bookies' stand under the umbrellas, tight knots gathered round the opening to the weighing room, behind which was the stewards' room. Glasses were leveled from everywhere upon the board. If a white flag went up the objection was overruled. If a green it was sustained. But the red remained unwaveringly.

"Taken him round to the hospital." \*

"Stretcher, was it?"

"Jus' gone through where all those people are . . ."

The doctor had got back from his tour of the course in his ambulance. Two riders had already been brought in and the nurse had

prepared them in readiness for his examination. Now the winner himself coming in on a stretcher. Busy thirty minutes ahead.

"Get him ready, Sister."

The winner lay unconscious wrapped in a horse blanket, his face mottled with the mud that had leaped up from flying hoofs.

"Looks sixteen," said the doctor curiously, and knelt to turn the gas a little lower under the forceps.

"Bin boiling for twenty minutes," said the sister.

"Place full of steam," said the doctor. "Been watching . . . ?" and he passed to the end cubicle.

"No," said the Sister shortly to his back. She disliked the Grand National and had waited behind the stands to patch up the damage.

The constables with the stretcher placed the winner on the bed by the door, leaving him still wrapped in his blanket. They retired and closed the door. The Sister slipped a towel under the muddy head and turning back the blanket started to undo the soaking jacket of black silk.

"Sister," roared the doctor from another cubicle . . . "No, stay where you are! I've got it!"

"Could you come here a minute?" said the Sister, at his side a few minutes later.

The doctor straightened his back. He had a touch of lumbago. "I'll be back, Jem," he said. "You're not much hurt. Cover up. Yes?"

"Just a minute . . . over here."

She whispered to him quietly. He slapped his raincoated cheek and went to the bed by the door. "Put your screens round." She planted them. "Constable," he said, poking his head out of the door, "get one of the stewards here, will you" (The roar of the crowd came in at the door.) "One of the stewards! Quick's you can. Here, I'll let you in this side door. You can get through." The crowd seethed, seizing upon every sign.

Mi crouched by the door without daring to ask after his child. He heard the doctor call. He saw the steward go in. "Anyway," he thought, "they've found out at once. They would. What's it matter if she's all right. She's won, the little beggar, the little beggar. Oh, my God."

The sergeant of police was by the stables. "Message from up there," he said briefly to his second. "Squad to go up to the hospital door. Row round the door. Something up with the winner."

The police marched up in a black snake. The people fell back. An ambulance came in from the Ormskirk Road and backed down the line of police. The red flag remained for a moment, then slowly the green flag mounted on the board. Objection sustained. A frightful clamor burst out in the grandstand.

In the stewards' room the glittering Manifesto looked down out of his frame and heard the low talk of this appalling desecration. A butcher's girl on a piebald horse had pounced up beside him into history.

"Got her off?" said one of the stewards in a low voice.

"Just about. There was a bit of a rush for a second. She called out something as the stretcher was being shoved in. Called out she was all right . . . to somebody in the crowd. Good God, it's . . . I'm glad we got her off quick. The crowd's boiling with excitement."

"How'd it get out so quick?"

"I dunno. Swell row this'll be. It'll have to be referred back to Weatherby's."

The Clerk of the Course came in. "Crowd's bubbling like kettles out there, Lord Henry. By Jove, it's the biggest ramp. How'd she pull it over!"

"Who's gone with her?"

"The doctor couldn't go. He's got two other men, one a baddish crash at Valentine's."

"Well, somebody ought to 'a' gone. Find out who's gone, will you?"

The Clerk of the Course disappeared.

"Tim's Chance wins, of course."

"Yes, that's been announced. There's no question. The objection is sustained definitely here on the course, and the rest must be referred to London. There'll be a special of the N.H.C., I should think it might be a case for legal proceedings. Well . . ." (as the door opened) "did you find out who went with her?"

"A second doctor, Lord Henry. A young man who's here very often Friend of Doctor Bodie's. And a constable."

"There should have been an official. Of course there should have been an official. What's the hospital?"

"Liverpool Central . . ."

"Isn't there a friend or relation with her?"

"Nobody."

"Well, she called out to somebody!"

"The somebody's hidden himself all right. Well for him! She's quite alone s'far as we can make out."

here straight out of offices, wearing their city suits and bowler hats, with thin shoes on their feet that'd be wet through before they got here, and cut to pieces by the time they'd walked down to the bottom of the garden. You may laugh, but it's true. I've seen 'em here, in this inn, many a time.

Two of our worst "mountain lunatics" (as my father used to call them) turned up the day before Good Friday . . . about thirty or maybe thirty-five years ago. Busson their name was, John and James Busson. They were in their early twenties—clerks in some solicitor's office down in Manchester.

Now, about that time there was a big tradition of climbing among professional folk round Manchester, and I fancy these two young fellows thought they were doing something rather smart in "going climbing"—just like their boss and his friends. I dare say, too, they'd heard him speak of the mountains in an exciting kind of way. They expected a bit more of a thrill here than they got going off to Southport or Buxton, or wherever they usually went.

The two had a small suitcase with them, and we supposed they'd have proper clothes in that, so we said nothing when they landed up in full rig-out: black coats and waistcoats, shining collars and cuffs, pointed shoes—or boots I suppose it was in those days.

Next morning was the kind of day we often have up here in spring, blue sky and sunshine early on, then it comes all over cloudy about eleven, with the afternoon stormy, and a few minutes of brightness later when the sun goes down.

"Splendid morning," said one of the Bussons to my father, who came in to speak to them. (They were still wearing the same clothes.)

"Ah! Looks all right now" Father answered, "but it'll be blowing later on."

"Oh no, I don't think so. Looks to me as though it would be fine right over the holidays. That's what they were saying down in Manchester. Fine all over Easter, they were saying."

Father kept quiet. Then the other Busson chipped in. "We're going for a climb today," he explained. "Over Blue Mell, on to High Stones, and down into Long Rigg for the night. We thought that would make a good day's going."

"It would," said my father. "It would make a very good day's going for strong walkers. But you're not going to try it in those clothes."

He didn't say that as a question. He just said it like I put it, as though no one could be as balmy as all that.

"Why not?" asked the first. "All right, aren't they? No objection to them?"



"We don't believe in dressing up," said the second.

Well, Father talked to them for a bit, but it was no good. They'd bought the district for four days with their return tickets, and they meant to make full use of it.

When Father saw how matters were, he shut up, but he told 'em one thing—enough to make sure nothing serious happened. "If you've any trouble on Blue Mell," he said, "don't go up on to the Stones: take the path that runs down from the cairn on Blue Mell, to the left. It's an easy way and a pleasant walk. It brings you down into Sledmere, where there's a farm for you to stay."

Well, they looked at Father much as any of you would look at me if I told you there was a nice walk up the hill behind the church, and about half an hour later they set off. They were still wearing the same outfit and they were carrying the suitcase on a stick between 'em.

That same evening a good few parties turned up, the place was packed, and we gave no more thought to our two lunatics. We supposed they'd been worn out after the first five miles and taken Father's advice and gone down into Sledmere. Then they'd have made their way to a station and gone off to spend their last two days' holiday in Southport.

But on Tuesday morning, when they should have been back at work, we had a wire from their office, asking where they were. Father got together all the guests there were still about the place, and we set off up Blue Mell to look for them. We came upon one, just as it was getting dark. We got him down here—with that stretch<sup>er</sup> you see in the corner—and a day or two later he told us what had happened. . . .

They'd set off from here that morning, the pair of them, as jolly as you please. They walked about a mile up the lane and thought there was nothing in this climbing business. "You could take a kid up here," said one.

Then they got out onto the fell, and began to find the going a bit steep. Their boots pinched, their ankles were sore, their calves and thighs ached. They'd pains in the small of their backs, and as they got a bit higher one of them even began to say that he felt dizzy—and all the time they'd got that suitcase to sweat along between 'em, or rather in turns, for it's a narrow track and they couldn't walk side by side.

It took 'em about three and a half hours to do the six odd miles to the top of Blue Mell, and they were never more delighted than when they saw that cairn. They sat down on it and ate most of the sandwiches Father'd made them take, and after talking it over they decided

to follow his advice and go down to Sledmere. It was about the only sensible thing they did that day—and even *that* they didn't really do.

"We don't want just to walk straight down," said John (he was the one that had felt dizzy, but he seemed to have forgotten about it now). "We can keep *fairly* close to the path, and every now and then, when we see a slab of rock, we'll go off and do a bit of climbing."

That seemed a good idea to James, and as soon as they'd finished lunch they started. They scrambled about on one or two pretty soft bits until what you'd expect happened—they lost the path. They followed a rabbit trail—then another—and when that petered out they hadn't enough mountain sense to strike uphill until they found the path again. Instead, they did what mountain lunatics always do, they started to go *down*. They know the world's somewhere below; they want to get back to it; they think the quickest way is to push downhill.

Well, they hadn't pushed far before they found themselves above the upper slabs of Garnet Fell. They were struggling down through grass and heather—and all of a sudden there they were, with about a hundred and fifty feet of rock below them, not sheer (because rock never is), but sheer enough. A big jump from the top—and you wouldn't strike the face till you were pretty near halfway to the bottom.

Even they could see that wasn't a place to fool about on, and they started to scramble back. Just then John must have had another of his attacks of mountain sickness; possibly his foot slipped (his shoes were near enough in ribbons); at any rate . . . he fell.

He fell about sixty feet, smashing himself as he hit the rock, and he fetched up on a narrow ledge, p'raps fifteen feet long by a couple of feet wide. You'll recognize the place when I tell you it's a climber's disappointment. It's about the best landmark on the face, but you can't get to it. It overhangs, so you can't come up from below, and, above, the rock's like glass. It wasn't absolutely the worst spot he could have chosen, because about ten yards to the west there's a chimney, and the chimney's just possible to a good climber—but the ten yards from the ledge to the chimney are not possible at all. . . .

I suppose John Busson was the first man on that bit of ledge since the beginning of time.

For a minute James didn't realize what had happened. Then he crept to the edge, looked down—and saw his brother lying. "There was blood coming out of him," he said.

James was a lunatic all right, but he'd got pluck. He didn't go off to find help or look about for some way of getting down—or do any of the things a sane man would have done. He saw his brother down there on the ledge, knew he needed help—and dropped. He lowered

his body over the edge, let go with his hands, and fell. Next thing he knew he was beside his brother on the ledge. He didn't seem to have noticed, at any rate not till afterward, what had happened to himself. He'd cracked two ribs, part of his nose was gone, he'd taken the flesh off his cheeks and forehead, and lost the tips of his fingers where his hands had tried to clutch the rock . . . he was the luckiest fool on earth to get off like that.

He moved along to his brother, and it can't have taken him long to realize the lad was in a bad way. John was lying as no human being ought to lie, and there wasn't a limb or part of a limb that he could move.

James made him as comfortable as he could, put a stone—which was all there was—under his head, and his own coat over his body, and began to tell him he wasn't as bad as all that and they'd be picked up before long. "Just you keep still, old man," he said, "and you'll be as right as rain in no time."

There was no need to tell John to keep still. It was as much as he could do to raise an eyelid. But he still had the use of his voice, and with that voice he kept saying one word—"Water." If John wants water, thought his brother, he must have some, and he began to look about him.

It was pretty clear there was no water on the ledge; but he remembered having stepped into a little brook not far from where his brother slipped, and he decided to go up and fetch water down from there. The only thing he had to bring it in was his brother's bowler hat, which was still on him when he landed—his own was about a hundred feet below.

He put that hat on his head and began to try to climb straight up the slab. You might as well try to climb Niagara Falls. It was then he noticed what had happened to his fingers, but he seems to have taken it quite coolly, as just something else he'd have to allow for on the climb. He looked round and caught sight of the chimney. "It was only ten yards away," he said, "so I decided to go across."

How that man made those ten yards—in that condition, in those clothes, without a rope, or proper boots, or the experience of climbing a back-yard wall—is a mountain mystery. They are impossible, and he did it. That's all there is to say. Having got across, he went up the chimney, reached the spring, bathed his face and hands, and filled the bowler hat. When he got back to the chimney he realized he didn't know how to get the bowler hat down to his brother. But by this time he wouldn't have been stopped by the president of the Alpine Club.

He took off his tie, looped it over his neck, made holes in the hat, knotted the ends of the tie through, and began to go down, with this thing like a beggar's money box around his neck. He got to the bottom, passed the hat over on to his back, and scrambled across those same ten yards of rock.

I tell you, it makes me ill to think of that journey even for a fit man, who's lived in mountains all his life. Well, you *can't* think of it, that's all. It isn't near enough possible to think of.

When James got back onto the ledge there was still about an inch and a half of water in the hat, and he poured it into his brother's mouth and down his face. It was dark almost by now, so he must have taken the best part of four hours to do those sixty feet up and down.

How James Busson got through that night, I don't know. Whether he walked up and down; or shouted; or lay still beside his brother; or sang—or stood on his head. He had only his ordinary suit on, and he'd put his coat over his brother. He was in a bad way himself, and he'd no food except some bits of sandwiches, which he reckoned his brother wouldn't want.

In the morning John was pretty near gone, but not quite—and he still kept saying "*Water.*" I suppose because his stomach was mashed up.

"After a bit, I couldn't stand it any more," said James. "I thought I'd go up to the top again and fill the hat." Fill the hat! as you or I might talk of filling buckets at a well.

If the journey'd been difficult before, it was five times more difficult now. The lad was chilled to the bone. He was hungry, and his wounds were all tender with exposure. He told me he was crying the whole way, but there must have been a bit of something in him or else the angels bore him up, because he got across those ten yards again and part way up the chimney.

Half up the chimney he felt he couldn't go another inch—and then he had what he thought was a splendid idea. He'd divert the little stream to run down over the rocks toward the ledge, and then he wouldn't have to make that terrible journey every time his brother needed a drink. ("Laying the water" was what he called it.)

Drawn on by his idea, he got up to the top, worked for a couple of hours, damming and channeling, and at last got the stream to flow the way he wanted. Then he crawled into the chimney, went down, crossed the ten yards for the fourth time—and found his brother had died while he was gone.

The lad seems then to have broken up completely. From that

moment he thought of nothing, did nothing, attempted nothing. I don't believe he even shouted—and it was nothing but chance that took us to where he was. "I put my own coat on again," he told us. But he didn't take any of his brother's clothes—there was even a broken biscuit in John's pocket which he hadn't touched. And he made no attempt at the climb he'd already done four times. . . .

It was Saturday afternoon when he got back to that ledge, and it was latish Tuesday when we found him, so he was there for three days with the body of his brother. All he had to live on was water—one little trickle of the stream he'd diverted. It ran down to a corner of the ledge; the rest followed a slope in the rock and poured away out of reach. Sometimes it rained. Sometimes it was fine. Every night, at least, it was bitterly cold.

The man who saw him first thought he was gone too. He was leaning back against the rock with his legs dangling over the edge, white as a sheet, except where his face was marked with blood. His damaged hands were laid out on the grass beside him as though they didn't belong.

When we lowered some brandy on a rope and it came down just beside his head, he stared at it—as though either he didn't see it or it was the most natural thing in the world for brandy to come dangling on ropes over a mountain ledge. He made no sign or movement, and he took no notice when we shouted.

So one of us went down on a rope, made another rope fast round him, and the two came up together—the man who'd gone down trying to keep the lad from getting any more knocks against the rock. Then we went back a second time for the body. We brought the two of them down here, put James to bed, with roaring fires, drink, hot-water bottles, and God-knows-what—and laid John's body among the bracken in the outhouse.

Two days later James suddenly sat up in bed, called us in, and began to tell us the whole story. He related it all through once, like I've told you—then he shut up and never said another word about it. He went back to his job, stayed with the same firm all his life, and died, we heard, about five years ago. There was talk at the time of the accident about giving him a medal of some kind, but I don't think it ever came to anything.

Medal or no medal, though, I should say that lad was the finest climber ever came inside this door—James Busson, his name was. You won't find it mentioned in any of the books on mountaineering.

# THE EIGHTY-YARD RUN

by IRWIN SHAW

*Stories about sports which are waged between two goals at opposite ends of a playing field seldom rise above the conventional magazine-story level. This is because their drama and personal involvement generally are confined to slight variations on the last-minute run for the winning score, the sprint in the home stretch to breast the tape, the caging of the puck as the buzzer rings, and so on. The eighty-yard run to which the title refers won no game and, in fact, took place in a practice scrimmage. Nevertheless, it was the turning point in the life of the hero, and Irwin Shaw's story about it is one of the few solid pieces of football fiction.*

THE PASS WAS HIGH and wide and he jumped for it, feeling it slap flatly against his hands, as he shook his hips to throw off the half-back who was diving at him. The center floated by, his hands desperately brushing Darling's knee as Darling picked his feet up high and delicately ran over a blocker and an opposing linesman in a jumble on the ground near the scrimmage line. He had ten yards in the clear and picked up speed, breathing easily, feeling his thigh pads rising and falling against his legs, listening to the sound of cleats behind him, pulling away from them, watching the other backs heading him off.

toward the sideline, the whole picture, the men closing in on him, the blockers fighting for position, the ground he had to cross, all suddenly clear in his head, for the first time in his life not a meaningless confusion of men, sounds, speed. He smiled a little to himself as he ran, holding the ball lightly in front of him with his two hands, his knees pumping high, his hips twisting in the almost girlish run of a back in a broken field. The first halfback came at him and he fed him his leg, then swung at the last moment, took the shock of the man's shoulder without breaking stride, ran right through him, his cleats biting securely into the turf. There was only the safety man now, coming warily at him, his arms crooked, hands spread. Darling tucked the ball in, spurted at him, driving hard, hurling himself along, his legs pounding, knees high, all two hundred pounds bunched into controlled attack. He was sure he was going to get past the safety man. Without thought, his arms and legs working beautifully together, he headed right for the safety man, stiff-armed him, feeling blood spurt instantaneously from the man's nose onto his hand, seeing his face go awry, head turned, mouth pulled to one side. He pivoted away, keeping the arm locked, dropping the safety man as he ran easily toward the goal line with the drumming of cleats diminishing behind him.

How long ago? It was autumn then, and the ground was getting hard because the nights were cold and leaves from the maples around the stadium blew across the practice fields in gusts of wind, and the girls were beginning to put polo coats over their sweaters when they came to watch practice in the afternoons. . . . Fifteen years. Darling walked slowly over the same ground in the spring twilight, in his neat shoes, a man of thirty-five dressed in a double-breasted suit, ten pounds heavier in the fifteen years, but not fat, with the years between 1925 and 1940 showing in his face.

The coach was smiling quietly to himself and the assistant coaches were looking at each other with pleasure the way they always did when one of the second stringers suddenly did something fine, bringing credit to them, making their \$2,000 a year a tiny bit more secure.

Darling trotted back, smiling, breathing deeply but easily, feeling wonderful, not tired, though this was the tail end of practice and he'd run eighty yards. The sweat poured off his face and soaked his jersey and he liked the feeling, the warm moistness lubricating his skin like oil. Off in a corner of the field some players were punting and the smack of leather against the ball came pleasantly through the afternoon air. The freshmen were running signals on the next field and the

quarterback's sharp voice, the pound of the eleven pairs of cleats, the "Dig, now dig!" of the coaches, the laughter of the players all somehow made him feel happy as he trotted back to midfield, listening to the applause and shouts of the students along the sidelines, knowing that after that run the coach would have to start him Saturday against Illinois.

Fifteen years, Darling thought, remembering the shower after the workout, the hot water steaming off his skin and the deep soapsuds and all the young voices singing with the water streaming down and towels going and managers running in and out and the sharp sweet smell of oil of wintergreen and everybody clapping him on the back as he dressed and Packard, the captain, who took being captain very seriously, coming over to him and shaking his hand and saying, "Darling, you're going to go places in the next two years."

The assistant manager fussed over him, wiping a cut on his leg with alcohol and iodine, the little sting making him realize suddenly how fresh and whole and solid his body felt. The manager slapped a piece of adhesive tape over the cut, and Darling noticed the sharp clean white of the tape against the ruddiness of the skin, fresh from the shower.

He dressed slowly, the softness of his shirt and the soft warmth of his wool socks and his flannel trousers a reward against his skin after the harsh pressure of the shoulder harness and thigh and hip pads. He drank three glasses of cold water, the liquid reaching down coldly inside of him, soothing the harsh dry places in his throat and belly left by the sweat and running and shouting of practice.

Fifteen years. •

The sun had gone down and the sky was green behind the stadium and he laughed quietly to himself as he looked at the stadium, rearing above the trees, and knew that on Saturday when the 70,000 voices roared as the team came running out onto the field, part of that enormous salute would be for him. He walked slowly, listening to the gravel crunch satisfactorily under his shoes in the still twilight, feeling his clothes swing lightly against his skin, breathing the thin evening air, feeling the wind move softly in his damp hair, wonderfully cool behind his ears and at the nape of his neck.

Louise was waiting for him at the road, in her car. The top was down and he noticed all over again, as he always did when he saw her, how pretty she was, the rough blond hair and the large, inquiring eyes and the bright mouth, smiling now.



She threw the door open. "Were you good today?" she asked.

"Pretty good," he said. He climbed in, sank luxuriously into the soft leather, stretched his legs far out. He smiled, thinking of the eighty yards. "Pretty damn good."

She looked at him seriously for a moment, then scrambled around, like a little girl, kneeling on the seat next to him, grabbed him, her hands along his ears, and kissed him as he sprawled, head back, on the seat cushion. She let go of him, but kept her head close to his, over his. Darling reached up slowly and rubbed the back of his hand against her cheek, lit softly by a street lamp a hundred feet away. They looked at each other, smiling.

Louise drove down to the lake and they sat there silently, watching the moon rise behind the hills on the other side. Finally he reached over, pulled her gently to him, kissed her. Her lips grew soft, her body sank into his, tears formed slowly in her eyes. He knew, for the first time, that he could do whatever he wanted with her.

"Tonight," he said. "I'll call for you at seven-thirty. Can you get out?"

She looked at him. She was smiling, but the tears were still full in her eyes. "All right," she said. "I'll get out. How about you? Won't the coach raise hell?"

Darling grinned. "I got the coach in the palm of my hand," he said. "Can you wait till seven-thirty?"

She grinned back at him. "No," she said.

They kissed and she started the car and they went back to town for dinner. He sang on the way home.

Christian Darling, thirty-five years old, sat on the frail spring grass, greener now than it ever would be again on the practice field, looked thoughtfully up at the stadium, a deserted ruin in the twilight. He had started on the first team that Saturday and every Saturday after that for the next two years, but it had never been as satisfactory as it should have been. He never had broken away, the longest run he'd ever made was thirty-five yards, and that in a game that was already won, and then that kid had come up from the third team, Diederich, a blank-faced German kid from Wisconsin, who ran like a bull, ripping lines to pieces Saturday after Saturday, plowing through, never getting hurt, never changing his expression, scoring more points, gaining more ground than all the rest of the team put together, making everybody's All-American, carrying the ball three times out of four, keeping everybody else out of the headlines. Darling was a good

blocker and he spent his Saturday afternoons working on the big Swedes and Polacks who played tackle and end for Michigan, Illinois, Purdue, hurling into huge pile-ups, bobbing his head wildly to elude the great raw hands swinging like meat-cleavers at him as he went charging in to open up holes for Diederich coming through like a locomotive behind him. Still, it wasn't so bad. Everybody liked him and he did his job and he was pointed out on the campus and boys always felt important when they introduced their girls to him at their proms, and Louise loved him and watched him faithfully in the games, even in the mud, when your own mother wouldn't know you, and drove him around in her car keeping the top down because she was proud of him and wanted to show everybody that she was Christian Darling's girl. She bought him crazy presents because her father was rich, watches, pipes, humidors, an icebox for beer for his room, curtains, wallets, a fifty-dollar dictionary.

"You'll spend every cent your old man owns," Darling protested once when she showed up at his rooms with seven different packages in her arms and tossed them onto the couch.

"Kiss me," Louise said, "and shut up."

"Do you want to break your poor old man?"

"I don't mind. I want to buy you presents."

"Why?"

"It makes me feel good. Kiss me. I don't know why. Did you know that you're an important figure?"

"Yes," Darling said gravely.

"When I was waiting for you at the library yesterday two girls saw you coming and one of them said to the other, 'That's Christian Darling. He's an important figure.'"

"You're a liar."

"I'm in love with an important figure."

"Still, why the hell did you have to give me a forty-pound dictionary?"

"I wanted to make sure," Louise said, "that you had a token of my esteem. I want to smother you in tokens of my esteem."

Fifteen years ago.

They'd married when they got out of college. There'd been other women for him, but all casual and secret, more for curiosity's sake, and vanity, women who'd thrown themselves at him and flattered him, a pretty mother at a summer camp for boys, an old girl from his home town who'd suddenly blossomed into a coquette, a friend of Louise's who had dogged him grimly for six months and had taken

advantage of the two weeks that Louise went home when her mother died. Perhaps Louise had known, but she'd kept quiet, loving him completely, filling his rooms with presents, religiously watching him battling with the big Swedes and Polacks on the line of scrimmage on Saturday afternoons, making plans for marrying him and living with him in New York and going with him there to the night clubs, the theaters, the good restaurants, being proud of him in advance, tall, white-teethed, smiling, large, yet moving lightly, with an athlete's grace, dressed in evening clothes, approvingly eyed by magnificently dressed and famous women in theater lobbies, with Louise adoringly at his side.

Her father, who manufactured inks, set up a New York office for Darling to manage and presented him with three hundred accounts, and they lived on Beekman Place with a view of the river with fifteen thousand dollars a year between them, because everybody was buying everything in those days, including ink. They saw all the shows and went to all the speak-easies and spent their fifteen thousand dollars a year and in the afternoons Louise went to the art galleries and the matinees of the more serious plays that Darling didn't like to sit through and Darling slept with a girl who danced in the chorus of *Rosalie* and with the wife of a man who owned three copper mines. Darling played squash three times a week and remained as solid as a stone barn and Louise never took her eyes off him when they were in the same room together, watching him with a secret, miser's smile, with a trick of coming over to him in the middle of a crowded room and saying gravely, in a low voice, "You're the handsomest man I've ever seen in my whole life. Want a drink?"

Nineteen twenty-nine came to Darling and to his wife and father-in-law, the maker of inks, just as it came to everyone else. The father-in-law waited until 1933 and then blew his brains out and when Darling went to Chicago to see what the books of the firm looked like he found out all that was left were debts and three or four gallons of unbought ink.

"Please, Christian," Louise said, sitting in their neat Beekman Place apartment, with a view of the river and prints of paintings by Dufy and Braque and Picasso on the wall, "please, why do you want to start drinking at two o'clock in the afternoon?"

"I have nothing else to do," Darling said, putting down his glass, emptied of its fourth drink. "Please pass the whisky."

Louise filled his glass. "Come take a walk with me," she said. "We'll walk along the river."

"I don't want to walk along the river," Darling said, squinting intensely at the prints of paintings by Dufy, Braque and Picasso.

"We'll walk along Fifth Avenue."

"I don't want to walk along Fifth Avenue."

"Maybe," Louise said gently, "you'd like to come with me to some art galleries. There's an exhibition by a man named Klee. . . ."

"I don't want to go to any art galleries. I want to sit here and drink Scotch whisky," Darling said. "Who the hell hung those goddam pictures up on the wall?"

"I did," Louise said.

"I hate them."

"I'll take them down," Louise said.

"Leave them there. It gives me something to do in the afternoon. I can hate them." Darling took a long swallow. "Is that the way people paint these days?"

"Yes, Christian. Please don't drink any more."

"Do you like painting like that?"

"Yes, dear."

"Really?"

"Really."

Darling looked carefully at the prints once more. "Little Louise Tucker. The middle-western beauty. I like pictures with horses in them. Why should you like pictures like that?"

"I just happen to have gone to a lot of galleries in the last few years . . ."

"Is that what you do in the afternoon?"

"That's what I do in the afternoon," Louise said.

"I drink in the afternoon."

Louise kissed him lightly on the top of his head as he sat there squinting at the pictures on the wall, the glass of whisky held firmly in his hand. She put on her coat and went out without saying another word. When she came back in the early evening, she had a job on a woman's fashion magazine.

They moved downtown and Louise went out to work every morning and Darling sat home and drank and Louise paid the bills as they came up. She made believe she was going to quit work as soon as Darling found a job, even though she was taking over more responsibility day by day at the magazine, interviewing authors, picking painters for the illustrations and covers, getting actresses to pose for pictures, going out for drinks with the right people, making a thousand new friends whom she loyally introduced to Darling.

"I don't like your hat," Darling said, once, when she came in in the evening and kissed him, her breath rich with Martinis.

"What's the matter with my hat, Baby?" she asked, running her fingers through his hair. "Everybody says it's very smart."

"It's too damned smart," he said. "It's not for you. It's for a rich, sophisticated woman of thirty-five with admirers."

Louise laughed. "I'm practicing to be a rich, sophisticated woman of thirty-five with admirers," she said. He stared soberly at her. "Now, don't look so grim, Baby. It's still the same simple little wife under the hat." She took the hat off, threw it into a corner, sat on his lap. "See? Homebody Number One."

"Your breath could run a train," Darling said, not wanting to be mean, but talking out of boredom, and sudden shock at seeing his wife curiously a stranger in a new hat, with a new expression in her eyes under the little brim, secret, confident, knowing.

Louise tucked her head under his chin so he couldn't smell her breath. "I had to take an author out for cocktails," she said. "He's a boy from the Ozark Mountains and he drinks like a fish. He's a Communist."

"What the hell is a Communist from the Ozarks doing writing for a woman's fashion magazine?"

Louise chuckled. "The magazine business is getting all mixed up these days. The publishers want to have a foot in every camp. And anyway, you can't find an author under seventy these days who isn't a Communist."

"I don't think I like you to associate with all those people, Louise," Darling said. "Drinking with them."

"He's a very nice, gentle boy," Louise said. "He reads Ernest Dowson."

"Who's Ernest Dowson?"

Louise patted his arm, stood up, fixed her hair. "He's an English poet."

Darling felt that somehow he had disappointed her. "Am I supposed to know who Ernest Dowson is?"

"No, dear. I'd better go in and take a bath."

After she had gone, Darling went over to the corner where the hat was lying and picked it up. It was nothing, a scrap of straw, a red flower, a veil, meaningless on his big hand, but on his wife's head a signal of something . . . big city, smart and knowing women drinking and dining with men other than their husbands, conversation about things a normal man wouldn't know much about, Frenchmen

who painted as though they used their elbows instead of brushes, composers who wrote whole symphonies without a single melody in them, writers who knew all about politics and women who knew all about writers, the movement of the proletariat, Marx, somehow mixed up with five-dollar dinners and the best-looking women in America and fairies who made them laugh and half-sentences immediately understood and secretly hilarious and wives who called their husbands "Baby." He put the hat down, a scrap of straw and a red flower, and a little veil. He drank some whisky straight and went into the bathroom where his wife was lying deep in her bath, singing to herself and smiling from time to time like a little girl, paddling the water gently with her hands, sending up a slight spicy fragrance from the bath salts she used.

He stood over her, looking down at her. She smiled up at him, her eyes half closed, her body pink and shimmering in the warm, scented water. All over again, with all the old suddenness, he was hit deep inside him with the knowledge of how beautiful she was, how much he needed her.

"I came in here," he said, "to tell you I wish you wouldn't call me 'Baby.'"

She looked up at him from the bath. her eyes quickly full of sorrow, half-understanding what he meant. He knelt and put his arms around her, his sleeves plunged heedlessly in the water, his shirt and jacket soaking wet as he clutched her wordlessly, holding her crazily tight, crushing her breath from her, kissing her desperately, searchingly, regretfully.

He got jobs after that, selling real estate and automobiles, but somehow, although he had a desk with his name on a wooden wedge on it, and he went to the office religiously at nine each morning, he never managed to sell anything and he never made any money.

Louise was made assistant editor, and the house was always full of strange men and women who talked fast and got angry on abstract subjects like mural painting, novelists, labor unions. Negro, short-story writers drank Louise's liquor, and a lot of Jews, and big solemn men with scarred faces and knotted hands who talked slowly but clearly about picket lines and battles with guns and leadpipe at mine-shaft-heads and in front of factory gates. And Louise moved among them all, confidently, knowing what they were talking about, with opinions that they listened to and argued about just as though she were a man. She knew everybody, condescended to no one, devoured books that Darling had never heard of, walked along the

streets of the city, excited, at home, soaking in all the million tides of New York without fear, with constant wonder. .

Her friends liked Darling and sometimes he found a man who wanted to get off in the corner and talk about the new boy who played fullback for Princeton, and the decline of the double wing-back, or even the state of the stock market, but for the most part he sat on the edge of things, solid and quiet in the high storm of words. "The dialectics of the situation . . . The theater has been given over to expert jugglers . . . Picasso? What man has a right to paint old bones and collect ten thousand dollars for them? . . . I stand firmly behind Trotsky . . . Poe was the last American critic. When he died they put lilies on the grave of American criticism. I don't say this because they panned my last book, but . . ."

Once in a while he caught Louise looking soberly and consideringly at him through the cigarette smoke and the noise and he avoided her eyes and found an excuse to get up and go into the kitchen for more ice or to open another bottle.

"Come on," Cathal Flaherty was saying, standing at the door with a girl, "you've got to come down and see this. It's down on Fourteenth Street, in the old Civic Repertory, and you can only see it on Sunday nights and I guarantee you'll come out of the theater singing." Flaherty was a big young Irishman with a broken nose who was the lawyer for a longshoreman's union, and he had been hanging around the house for six months on and off, roaring and shutting everybody else up when he got in an argument. "It's a new play, *Waiting for Lefty*, it's about taxi-drivers."

"Odets," the girl with Flaherty said. "It's by a guy named Odets."

"I never heard of him," Darling said.

"He's a new one," the girl said.

"It's like watching a bombardment," Flaherty said. "I saw it last Sunday night. You've got to see it."

"Come on, Baby," Louise said to Darling, excitement in her eyes already. "We've been sitting in the *Sunday Times* all day, this'll be a great change."

"I see enough taxi-drivers every day," Darling said, not because he meant that, but because he didn't like to be around Flaherty, who said things that made Louise laugh a lot and whose judgment she accepted on almost every subject. "Let's go to the movies."

"You've never seen anything like this before," Flaherty said. "He wrote this play with a baseball bat."

"Come on," Louise coaxed, "I bet it's wonderful."

"He has long hair," the girl with Flaherty said. "Odets. I met him at a party. He's an actor. He didn't say a goddam thing all night."

"I don't feel like going down to Fourteenth Street," Darling said, wishing Flaherty and his girl would get out. "It's gloomy."

"Oh, hell!" Louise said loudly. She looked coolly at Darling, as though she'd just been introduced to him and was making up her mind about him, and not very favorably. He saw her looking at him, knowing there was something new and dangerous in her face and he wanted to say something, but Flaherty was there and his damned girl, and anyway, he didn't know what to say.

"I'm going," Louise said, getting her coat. "I don't think Fourteenth Street is gloomy."

"I'm telling you," Flaherty was saying, helping her on with her coat, "it's the Battle of Gettysburg, in Brooklynese."

"Nobody could get a word out of him," Flaherty's girl was saying as they went through the door. "He just sat there all night."

The door closed. Louise hadn't said good night to him. Darling walked around the room four times, then sprawled out on the sofa, on top of the *Sunday Times*. He lay there for five minutes looking at the ceiling, thinking of Flaherty walking down the street talking in that booming voice, between the girls, holding their arms.

Louise had looked wonderful. She'd washed her hair in the afternoon and it had been very soft and light and clung close to her head as she stood there angrily putting her coat on. Louise was getting prettier every year, partly because she knew by now how pretty she was, and made the most of it.

"Nuts," Darling said, standing up. "Oh, nuts"

He put on his coat and went down to the nearest bar and had five drinks off by himself in a corner before his money ran out.

The years since then had been foggy and downhill. Louise had been nice to him, and in a way, loving and kind, and they'd fought only once, when he said he was going to vote for Landon. ("Oh, Christ," she'd said, "doesn't *anything* happen inside your head? Don't you read the papers? The penniless Republican!") She'd been sorry later and apologized for hurting him, but apologized as she might to a child. He'd tried hard, had gone grimly to the art galleries, the concert halls, the bookshops, trying to gain on the trail of his wife, but it was no use. He was bored, and none of what he saw or heard or dutifully



read made much sense to him and finally he gave it up. He had thought, many nights as he ate dinner alone, knowing that Louise would come home late and drop silently into bed without explanation, of getting a divorce, but he knew the loneliness, the hopelessness, of not seeing her again would be too much to take. So he was good, completely devoted, ready at all times to go any place with her, do anything she wanted. He even got a small job, in a broker's office and paid his own way, bought his own liquor.

Then he'd been offered the job of going from college to college as a tailor's representative. "We want a man," Mr. Rosenberg had said, "who as soon as you look at him, you say, 'There's a university man.'" Rosenberg had looked approvingly at Darling's broad shoulders and well-kept waist, at his carefully brushed hair and his honest, wrinkle-less face. "Frankly, Mr. Darling, I am willing to make you a proposition. I have inquired about you, you are favorably known on your old campus, I understand you were in the backfield with Alfred Diederich."

Darling nodded. "Whatever happened to him?"

"He is walking around in a cast for seven years now. An iron brace. He played professional football and they broke his neck for him."

Darling smiled. That, at least, had turned out well.

"Our suits are an easy product to sell, Mr. Darling," Rosenberg said. "We have a handsome, custom-made garment. What has Brooks Brothers got that we haven't got? A name. No more."

"I can make fifty, sixty dollars a week," Darling said to Louise that night. "And expenses. I can save some money and then come back to New York and really get started here."

"Yes, Baby," Louise said.

"As it is," Darling said carefully, "I can make it back here once a month, and holidays and the summer. We can see each other often."

"Yes, Baby." He looked at her face, lovelier now at thirty-five than it had ever been before, but fogged over now as it had been for five years with a kind of patient, kindly, remote boredom.

"What do you say?" he asked. "Should I take it?" Deep within him he hoped fiercely, longingly, for her to say, "No, Baby, you stay right here." but she said, as he knew she'd say, "I think you'd better take it."

He nodded. He had to get up and stand with his back to her, looking out the window, because there were things plain on his face that

she had never seen in the fifteen years she'd known him. "Fifty dollars is a lot of money," he said. "I never thought I'd ever see fifty dollars again." He laughed. Louise laughed, too.

Christian Darling sat on the frail green grass of the practice field. The shadow of the stadium had reached out and covered him. In the distance the lights of the university shone a little mistily in the light haze of evening. Fifteen years. Flaherty even now was calling for his wife, buying her a drink, filling whatever bar they were in with that voice of his and that easy laugh. Darling half-closed his eyes, almost saw the boy fifteen years ago reach for the pass, slip the halfback, go skittering lightly down the field, his knees high and fast and graceful, smiling to himself because he knew he was going to get past the safety man. That was the high point, Darling thought, fifteen years ago, on an autumn afternoon, twenty years old and far from death, with the air coming easily into his lungs, and a deep feeling inside him that he could do anything, knock over anybody, outrun whatever had to be outrun. And the shower after and the three glasses of water and the cool night air on his damp head and Louise sitting hatless in the open car with a smile and the first kiss she ever really meant. The high point, an eighty-yard run in the practice, and a girl's kiss and everything after that a decline. Darling laughed. He had practiced the wrong thing, perhaps. He hadn't practiced for 1929 and New York City and a girl who would turn into a woman. Somewhere, he thought, there must have been a point where she moved up to me, was even with me for a moment, when I could have held her hand, if I'd known, held tight; gone with her. Well, he'd never known. Here he was on a playing field that was fifteen years away and his wife was in another city having dinner with another and better man, speaking with him a different, new language, a language nobody had ever taught him.

Darling stood up, smiled a little, because if he didn't smile he knew the tears would come. He looked around him. This was the spot. O'Connor's pass had come sliding out just to here . . . the high point. Darling put up his hands, felt all over again the flat slap of the ball. He shook his hips to throw off the halfback; cut back inside the center, picked his knees high as he ran gracefully over two men jumbled on the ground at the line of scrimmage, ran easily, gaining speed, for ten yards, holding the ball lightly in his two hands, swung away from the halfback diving at him, ran, swinging his hips in the almost

girlish manner of a back in a broken field, tore into the safety man, his shoes drumming heavily on the turf, stiff-armed, elbow locked, pivoted, raced lightly and exultantly for the goal line.

It was only after he had sped over the goal line and slowed to a trot that he saw the boy and girl sitting together on the turf, looking at him wonderingly.

He stopped short, dropping his arms. "I . . ." he said, gasping a little, though his condition was fine and the run hadn't winded him. "I—once I played here."

The boy and the girl said nothing. Darling laughed embarrassedly, looked hard at them sitting there, close to each other, shrugged, turned and went toward his hotel, the sweat breaking out on his face and running down into his collar.

# SILVER BLAZE

by SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

(1894)

*An athlete of considerable prowess himself, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle reflected this interest in many of his stories. Rugby, for instance, is the background for The Case of the Missing Three-Quarters, fox hunting figures prominently in How the Brigadier Skew the Fox, and Rodney Stone, a full-length novel, is largely about prize fighting. However, the most celebrated of Sir Arthur's stories which touch on sports is Silver Blaze, which first appeared in book form in the collection called The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes. When Silver Blaze, the race horse favored to win the Wessex Cup, mysteriously vanishes and his trainer is murdered, Holmes cannot rest calmly in Baker Street and sets off to get to the bottom of the murky business.*

I AM AFRAID, Watson, that I shall have to go," said Holmes as we sat down together to our breakfast one morning.

"Go! Where to?"

"To Dartmoor; to King's Pyland."

I was not surprised. Indeed, my only wonder was that he had not already been mixed up in this extraordinary case, which was the one topic of conversation through the length and breadth of England. For a whole day my companion had rambled about the room with his chin upon his chest and his brows knitted, charging and recharging his pipe with the strongest black tobacco, and absolutely deaf to any of my questions or remarks. Fresh editions of every paper had been sent up by our news agent, only to be glanced over and tossed down into a corner. Yet, silent as he was, I knew perfectly well what it was over which he was brooding. There was but one problem before the public which could challenge his powers of analysis, and that was the singular disappearance of the favorite for the Wessex Cup, and the tragic murder of its trainer. When, therefore, he suddenly announced his intention of setting out for the

scene of the drama, it was only what I had both expected and hoped for.

"I should be most happy to go down with you if I should not be in the way," said I.

"My dear Watson, you would confer a great favor upon me by coming. And I think that your time will not be misspent, for there are points about the case which promise to make it an absolutely unique one. We have, I think, just time to catch our train at Paddington, and I will go further into the matter upon our journey. You would oblige me by bringing with you your very excellent field glass."

And so it happened that an hour or so later I found myself in the corner of a first-class carriage flying along en route for Exeter, while Sherlock Holmes, with his sharp, eager face framed in his ear-flapped traveling cap, dipped rapidly into the bundle of fresh papers which he had procured at Paddington. We had left Reading far behind us before he thrust the last one of them under the seat and offered me his cigar case.

"We are going well," said he, looking out of the window and glancing at his watch. "Our rate at present is fifty-three and a half miles an hour."

"I have not observed the quarter-mile posts," said I.

"Nor have I. But the telegraph posts upon this line are sixty yards apart, and the calculation is a simple one. I presume that you have looked into this matter of the murder of John S. raker and the disappearance of Silver Blaze?"

"I have seen what the *Telegraph* and the *Chronicle* have to say."

"It is one of those cases where the art of the reasoner should be used rather for the sifting of details than for the acquiring of fresh evidence. The tragedy has been so uncommon, so complete, and of such personal importance to so many people that we are suffering from a plethora of surmise, conjecture, and hypothesis. The difficulty is to detach the framework of fact—of absolute undeniable fact—from the embellishments of theorists and reporters. Then, having established ourselves upon this sound basis, it is our duty to see what inferences may be drawn and what are the special points upon which the whole mystery turns. On Tuesday evening I received telegrams from both Colonel Ross, the owner of the horse, and from Inspector Gregory, who is looking after the case, inviting my co-operation."

"Tuesday evening!" I exclaimed. "And this is Thursday morning. Why didn't you go down yesterday?"

"Because I made a blunder, my dear Watson—which is, I am afraid, a more common occurrence than anyone would think who only knew me through your memoirs. The fact is that I could not believe it possible that the most remarkable horse in England could long remain concealed, especially in so sparsely inhabited a place as the north of Dartmoor. From hour to hour yesterday I expected to hear that he had been found, and that his abductor was the murderer of John Straker. When, however, another morning had come and I found that beyond the arrest of young Fitzroy Simpson nothing had been done, I felt that it was time for me to take action. Yet in some ways I feel that yesterday has not been wasted."

"You have formed a theory, then?"

"At least I have got a grip of the essential facts of the case. I shall enumerate them to you, for nothing clears up a case so much as stating it to another person, and I can hardly expect your co-operation if I do not show you the position from which we start."

I lay back against the cushions, puffing at my cigar, while Holmes, leaning forward, with his long, thin forefinger checking off the points upon the palm of his left hand, gave me a sketch of the events which had led to our journey.

"Silver Blaze," said he, "is from the Somomy stock and holds as brilliant a record as his famous ancestor. He is now in his fifth year and has brought in turn each of the prizes of the turf to Colonel Ross, his fortunate owner. Up to the time of the catastrophe he was the first favorite for the Wessex Cup, the betting being three to one on him. He has always, however, been a prime favorite with the racing public and has never yet disappointed them, so that even at those odds enormous sums of money have been laid upon him. It is obvious, therefore, that there were many people who had the strongest interest in preventing Silver Blaze from being there at the fall of the flag next Tuesday.

"The fact was, of course, appreciated at King's Pyland, where the colonel's training stable is situated. Every precaution was taken to guard the favorite. The trainer, John Straker, is a retired jockey who rode in Colonel Ross's colors before he became too heavy for the weighing chair. He has served the colonel for five years as jockey and for seven as trainer and has always shown himself to be a zealous and honest servant. Under him were three lads, for the establishment was a small one, containing only four horses in all. One of these lads sat up each night in the stable, while the others slept in the loft. All three bore excellent characters. John Straker, who is a married man, lived in a small villa about two hundred

yards from the stables. He has no children, keeps one maidservant, and is comfortably off. The country round is very lonely, but about half a mile to the north there is a small cluster of villas which have been built by a Tavistock contractor for the use of invalids and others who may wish to enjoy the pure Dartmoor air. Tavistock itself lies two miles to the west, while across the moor, also about two miles distant, is the larger training establishment of Mapleton, which belongs to Lord Backwater and is managed by Silas Brown. In every other direction the moor is a complete wilderness, inhabited only by a few roaming gypsies. Such was the general situation last Monday night when the catastrophe occurred.

"On that evening the horses had been exercised and watered as usual, and the stables were locked up at nine o'clock. Two of the lads waked up to the trainer's house, where they had supper in the kitchen, while the third, Ned Hunter, remained on guard. At a few minutes after nine the maid, Edith Baxter, carried down to the stables his supper, which consisted of a dish of curried mutton. She took no liquid, as there was a water tap in the stables, and it was the rule that the lad on duty should drink nothing else. The maid carried a lantern with her, as it was very dark and the path ran across the open moor.

"Edith Baxter was within thirty yards of the stables when a man appeared out of the darkness and called to her to stop. As he stepped into the circle of yellow light thrown by the lantern she saw that he was a person of gentlemanly bearing, dressed in a gray suit of tweeds, with a cloth cap. He wore gaiters and carried a heavy stick with a knob to it. She was most impressed, however, by the extreme pallor of his face and by the nervousness of his manner. His age, she thought, would be rather over thirty than under it.

"'Can you tell me where I am?' he asked. 'I had almost made up my mind to sleep on the moor when I saw the light of your lantern.'

"'You are close to the King's Pyland training stables,' said she.

"'Oh, indeed! What a stroke of luck!' he cried. 'I understand that a stableboy sleeps there alone every night. Perhaps that is his supper which you are carrying to him. Now I am sure that you would not be too proud to earn the price of a new dress, would you?' He took a piece of white paper folded up out of his waistcoat pocket. 'See that the boy has this tonight, and you shall have the prettiest frock that money can buy.'

"She was frightened by the earnestness of his manner and ran past him to the window through which she was accustomed to hand

the meals. It was already opened, and Hunter was seated at the small table inside. She had begun to tell him of what had happened when the stranger came up again.

"'Good evening,' said he, looking through the window. 'I wanted to have a word with you.' The girl has sworn that as he spoke she noticed the corner of the little paper packet protruding from his closed hand.

"'What business have you here?' asked the lad.

"'It's business that may put something into your pocket,' said the other. 'You've two horses in for the Wessex Cup—Silver Blaze and Bayard. Let me have the straight tip and you won't be a loser. Is it a fact that at the weights Bayard could give the other a hundred yards in five furlongs, and that the stable have put their money on him?'

"'So, you're one of those damned touts!' cried the lad. 'I'll show you how we serve them in King's Pyland.' He sprang up and rushed across the stable to unloose the dog. The girl fled away to the house, but as she ran she looked back and saw that the stranger was leaning through the window. A minute later, however, when Hunter rushed out with the hound he was gone, and though he ran all round the buildings he failed to find any trace of him."

"One moment," I asked. "Did the stableboy, when he ran out with the dog, leave the door unlocked behind him?"

"Excellent, Watson, excellent!" murmured my companion. "The importance of the point struck me so forcibly that I sent a special wire to Dartmoor yesterday to clear the matter up. The boy locked the door before he left it. The window, I may add, was not large enough for a man to get through.

"Hunter waited until his fellow grooms had returned, when he sent a message to the trainer and told him what had occurred. Straker was excited at hearing the account, although he does not seem to have quite realized its true significance. It left him, however, vaguely uneasy, and Mrs. Straker, waking at one in the morning, found that he was dressing. In reply to her inquiries, he said that he could not sleep on account of his anxiety about the horses, and that he intended to walk down to the stables to see that all was well. She begged him to remain at home, as she could hear the rain pattering against the window, but in spite of her entreaties he pulled on his large mackintosh and left the house.

"Mrs. Straker awoke at seven in the morning to find that her husband had not yet returned. She dressed herself hastily, called the maid, and set off for the stables. The door was open; inside, hud-



dled together upon a chair, Hunter was sunk in a state of absolute stupor, the favorite's stall was empty, and there were no signs of his trainer.

"The two lads who slept in the chaff-cutting loft above the harness room were quickly aroused. They had heard nothing during the night, for they are both sound sleepers. Hunter was obviously under the influence of some powerful drug, and as no sense could be got out of him, he was left to sleep it off while the two lads and the two women ran out in search of the absentees. They still had hopes that the trainer had for some reason taken out the horse for early exercise, but on ascending the knoll near the house, from which all the neighboring moors were visible, they not only could see no signs of the missing favorite, but they perceived something which warned them that they were in the presence of a tragedy.

"About a quarter of a mile from the stables John Straker's overcoat was flapping from a furze bush. Immediately beyond there was a bowl-shaped depression in the moor, and at the bottom of this was found the dead body of the unfortunate trainer. His head had been shattered by a savage blow from some heavy weapon, and he was wounded on the thigh, where there was a long, clean cut, inflicted evidently by some very sharp instrument. It was clear, however, that Straker had defended himself vigorously against his assailants, for in his right hand he held a small knife, which was clotted with blood up to the handle, while in his left he clasped a red-and-black silk cravat, which was recognized by the maid as having been worn on the preceding evening by the stranger who had visited the stables. Hunter, on recovering from his stupor, was also quite positive as to the ownership of the cravat. He was equally certain that the same stranger had, while standing at the window, drugged his curried mutton, and so deprived the stables of their watchman. As to the missing horse, there were abundant proofs in the mud which lay at the bottom of the fatal hollow that he had been there at the time of the struggle. But from that morning he has disappeared, and although a large reward has been offered, and all the gypsies of Dartmoor are on the alert, no news has come of him. Finally, an analysis has shown that the remains of his supper left by the stable lad contained an appreciable quantity of powdered opium, while the people at the house partook of the same dish on the same night without any ill effect.

"Those are the main facts of the case, stripped of all surmise, and stated as baldly as possible. I shall now recapitulate what the police have done in the matter.

"Inspector Gregory, to whom the case has been committed, is an extremely competent officer. Were he but gifted with imagination he might rise to great heights in his profession. On his arrival he promptly found and arrested the man upon whom suspicion naturally rested. There was little difficulty in finding him, for he inhabited one of those villas which I have mentioned. His name, it appears, was Fitzroy Simpson. He was a man of excellent birth and education, who had squandered a fortune upon the turf, and who lived now by doing a little quiet and genteel bookmaking in the sporting clubs of London. An examination of his betting book shows that bets to the amount of five thousand pounds had been registered by him against the favorite. On being arrested he volunteered the statement that he had come down to Dartmoor in the hope of getting some information about the King's Pyland horses, and also about Desborough, the second favorite, which was in charge of Silas Brown at the Mapleton stables. He did not attempt to deny that he had acted as described upon the evening before, but declared that he had no sinister designs and had simply wished to obtain firsthand information. When confronted with his cravat he turned very pale and was utterly unable to account for its presence in the hand of the murdered man. His wet clothing showed that he had been out in the storm of the night before, and his stick, which was a penang-lawyer weighted with lead, was just such a weapon as might, by repeated blows, have inflicted the terrible injuries to which the trainer had succumbed. On the other hand, there was no wound upon his person, while the state of Straker's knife would show that one at least of his assailants must bear his mark upon him. There you have it all in a nutshell, Watson, and if you can give me any light I shall be infinitely obliged to you."

I had listened with the greatest interest to the statement which Holmes, with characteristic clearness, had laid before me. Though most of the facts were familiar to me, I had not sufficiently appreciated their relative importance, nor their connection to each other.

"Is it not possible," I suggested, "that the incised wound upon Straker may have been caused by his own knife in the convulsive struggles which follow any brain injury?"

"It is more than possible: it is probable," said Holmes. "In that case one of the main points in favor of the accused disappears."

"And yet," said I, "even now I fail to understand what the theory of the police can be."

"I am afraid that whatever theory we state has very grave objections to it," returned my companion. "The police imagine, I

take it, that this Fitzroy Simpson, having drugged the lad, and having in some way obtained a duplicate key, opened the stable door and took out the horse, with the intention, apparently, of kidnaping him altogether. His bridle is missing, so that Simpson must have put this on. Then, having left the door open behind him, he was leading the horse away over the moor when he was either met or overtaken by the trainer. A row naturally ensued. Simpson beat out the trainer's brains with his heavy stick without receiving any injury from the small knife which Straker used in self-defense, and then the thief either led the horse on to some secret hiding place, or else it may have bolted during the struggle and be now wandering out on the moors. That is the case as it appears to the police, and improbable as it is, all other explanations are more improbable still. However, I shall very quickly test the matter when I am once upon the spot, and until then I cannot really see how we can get much further than our present position."

It was evening before we reached the little town of Tavistock, which lies, like the boss of a shield, in the middle of the huge circle of Dartmoor. Two gentlemen were awaiting us in the station--the one a tall, fair man with lionlike hair and beard and curiously penetrating light blue eyes; the other a small, alert person, very neat and dapper, in a frock coat and gaiters, with trim little side whiskers and an eyeglass. The latter was Colonel Ross, the well-known sportsman; the other, Inspector Gregory, a man who was rapidly making his name in the English detective service.

"I am delighted that you have come down, Mr. Holmes," said the colonel. "The inspector here has done all that could possibly be suggested, but I wish to leave no stone unturned in trying to avenge poor Straker and in recovering my horse."

"Have there been any fresh developments?" asked Holmes.

"I am sorry to say that we have made very little progress," said the inspector. "We have an open carriage outside, and as you would no doubt like to see the place before the light fails, we might talk it over as we drive."

A minute later we were all seated in a comfortable landau and were rattling through the quaint old Devonshire city. Inspector Gregory was full of his case and poured out a stream of remarks, while Holmes threw in an occasional question or interjection. Colonel Ross leaned back with his arms folded and his hat tilted over his eyes, while I listened with interest to the dialogue of the two detectives. Gregory was formulating his theory, which was almost exactly what Holmes had foretold in the train.

"The net is drawn pretty close round Fitzroy Simpson," he remarked, "and I believe myself that he is our man. At the same time I recognize that the evidence is purely circumstantial, and that some new development may upset it."

"How about Straker's knife?"

"We have quite come to the conclusion that he wounded himself in his fall."

"My friend Dr. Watson made that suggestion to me as we came down. If so, it would tell against this man Simpson."

"Undoubtedly. He has neither a knife nor any sign of a wound. The evidence against him is certainly very strong. He had a great interest in the disappearance of the favorite. He lies under suspicion of having poisoned the stableboy; he was undoubtedly out in the storm; he was armed with a heavy stick, and his cravat was found in the dead man's hand. I really think we have enough to go before a jury."

Holmes shook his head. "A clever counsel would tear it all to rags," said he. "Why should he take the horse out of the stable? If he wished to injure it, why could he not do it there? Has a duplicate key been found in his possession? What chemist sold him the powdered opium? Above all, where could he, a stranger to the district, hide a horse, and such a horse as this? What is his own explanation as to the paper which he wished the maid to give to the stableboy?"

"He says that it was a ten-pound note. One was found in his purse. But your other difficulties are not so formidable as they seem. He is not a stranger to the district. He has twice lodged at Tavistock in the summer. The opium was probably brought from London. The key, having served its purpose, would be hurled away. The horse may be at the bottom of one of the pits or old mines upon the moor."

"What does he say about the cravat?"

"He acknowledges that it is his and declares that he had lost it. But a new element has been introduced into the case which may account for his leading the horse from the stable."

Holmes pricked up his ears.

"We have found traces which show that a party of gypsies encamped on Monday night within a mile of the spot where the murder took place. On Tuesday they were gone. Now, presuming that there was some understanding between Simpson and these gypsies, might he not have been leading the horse to them when he was overtaken, and may they not have him now?"

"It is certainly possible."

"The moor is being scoured for these gypsies. I have also examined every stable and outhouse in Tavistock, and for a radius of ten miles."

"There is another training stable quite close, I understand?"

"Yes, and that is a factor which we must certainly not neglect. As Desborough, their horse, was second in the betting, they had an interest in the disappearance of the favorite. Silas Brown, the trainer, is known to have had large bets upon the event, and he was no friend to poor Straker. We have, however, examined the stables, and there is nothing to connect him with the affair."

"And nothing to connect this man Simpson with the interests of the Mapleton stables?"

"Nothing at all."

Holmes leaned back in the carriage, and the conversation ceased. A few minutes later our driver pulled up at a neat little red-brick villa with overhanging eaves which stood by the road. Some distance off, across a paddock, lay a long gray-tiled outbuilding. In every other direction the low curves of the moor, bronze-colored from the fading ferns, stretched away to the skyline, broken only by the steeples of Tavistock, and by a cluster of houses away to the westward which marked the Mapleton stables. We all sprang out with the exception of Holmes, who continued to lean back with his eyes fixed upon the sky in front of him, entirely absorbed in his own thoughts. It was only when I touched his arm that he roused himself with a violent start and stepped out of the carriage.

"Excuse me," said he, turning to Colonel Ross, who had looked at him in some surprise. "I was daydreaming." There was a gleam in his eyes and a suppressed excitement in his manner which convinced me, used as I was to his ways, that his hand was upon a clue, though I could not imagine where he had found it.

"Perhaps you would prefer at once to go on to the scene of the crime, Mr. Holmes?" said Gregory.

"I think that I should prefer to stay here a little and go into one or two questions of detail. Straker was brought back here, I presume?"

"Yes, he lies upstairs. The inquest is tomorrow."

"He has been in your service some years, Colonel Ross?"

"I have always found him an excellent servant."

"I presume that you made an inventory of what he had in his pockets at the time of his death, Inspector?"

"I have the things themselves in the sitting room if you would care to see them."

"I should be very glad." We all filed into the front room and sat round the central table while the inspector unlocked a square tin box and laid a small heap of things before us. There was a box of vestas, two inches of tallow candle, an A D P brier-root pipe, a pouch of sealskin with half an ounce of long-cut Cavendish, a silver watch with a gold chain, five sovereigns in gold, an aluminum pencil case, a few papers, and an ivory-handled knife with a very delicate, inflexible blade marked Weiss & Co., London.

"This is a very singular knife," said Holmes, lifting it up and examining it minutely. "I presume, as I see bloodstains upon it, that it is the one which was found in the dead man's grasp. Watson, this knife is surely in your line?"

"It is what we call a cataract knife," said I.

"I thought so. A very delicate blade devised for very delicate work. A strange thing for a man to carry with him upon a rough expedition, especially as it would not shut in his pocket."

"The tip was guarded by a disc of cork which we found beside his body," said the inspector. "His wife tells us that the knife had lain upon the dressing table, and that he had picked it up as he left the room. It was a poor weapon, but perhaps the best that he could lay his hands on at the moment."

"Very possibly. How about these papers?"

"Three of them are receipted hay dealers' accounts. One of them is a letter of instructions from Colonel Ross. This other is a milliner's account for thirty-seven pounds fifteen made out by Madame Lesurier, of Bond Street, to William Derbyshire. Mrs. Straker tells us that Derbyshire was a friend of her husband's, and that occasionally his letters were addressed here."

"Madame Derbyshire had somewhat expensive tastes," remarked Holmes, glancing down the account. "Twenty-two guineas is rather heavy for a single costume. However, there appears to be nothing more to learn, and we may now go down to the scene of the crime."

As we emerged from the sitting room a woman, who had been waiting in the passage, took a step forward and laid her hand upon the inspector's sleeve. Her face was haggard and thin and eager, stamped with the print of a recent horror.

"Have you got them? Have you found them?" she panted.

"No, Mrs. Straker. But Mr. Holmes here has come from London to help us, and we shall do all that is possible."

"Surely I met you in Plymouth at a garden party some little time ago, Mrs. Straker?" said Holmes.

"No, sir; you are mistaken."

"Dear me! Why, I could have sworn to it. You wore a costume of dove-colored silk with ostrich-feather trimming."

"I never had such a dress, sir," answered the lady.

"Ah, that quite settles it," said Holmes. And with an apology he followed the inspector outside. A short walk across the moor took us to the hollow in which the body had been found. At the brink of it was the furze bush upon which the coat had been hung.

"There was no wind that night, I understand," said Holmes.

"None, but very heavy rain."

"In that case the overcoat was not blown against the furze bushes, but placed there."

"Yes, it was laid across the bush."

"You fill me with interest. I perceive that the ground has been trampled up a good deal. No doubt many feet have been here since Monday night."

"A piece of matting has been laid here at the side, and we have all stood upon that."

"Excellent."

"In this bag I have one of the boots which Straker wore, one of Fitzroy Simpson's shoes, and a cast horseshoe of Silver Blaze."

"My dear Inspector, you surpass yourself!" Holmes took the bag, and, descending into the hollow, he pushed the matting into a more central position. Then stretching himself upon his face and leaning his chin upon his hands, he made a careful study of the trampled mud in front of him. "Hullo!" said he suddenly. "What's this?" It was a wax vesta, half burned, which was so coated with mud that it looked at first like a little chip of wood.

"I cannot think how I came to overlook it," said the inspector with an expression of annoyance.

"It was invisible, buried in the mud. I only saw it because I was looking for it."

"What! you expected to find it?"

"I thought it not unlikely."

He took the boots from the bag and compared the impressions of each of them with marks upon the ground. Then he clambered up to the rim of the hollow and crawled about among the ferns and bushes.

"I am afraid that there are no more tracks," said the inspector. "I have examined the ground very carefully for a hundred yards in each direction."

"Indeed!" said Holmes, rising. "I should not have the impertinence to do it again after what you say. But I should like to take a little walk over the moor before it grows dark that I may know my ground to-morrow, and I think that I shall put this horseshoe into my pocket for luck."

Colonel Ross, who had shown some signs of impatience at my companion's quiet and systematic method of work, glanced at his watch. "I wish you would come back with me, Inspector," said he. "There are several points on which I should like your advice, and especially as to whether we do not owe it to the public to remove our horse's name from the entries for the cup."

"Certainly not," cried Holmes with decision. "I should let the name stand."

The colonel bowed. "I am very glad to have had your opinion, sir," said he. "You will find us at poor Straker's house when you have finished your walk, and we can drive together into Tavistock."

He turned back with the inspector, while Holmes and I walked slowly across the moor. The sun was beginning to sink behind the stable of Mapleton, and the long, sloping plain in front of us was tinged with gold, deepening into rich, ruddy browns where the faded ferns and brambles caught the evening light. But the glories of the landscape were all wasted upon my companion, who was sunk in the deepest thought.

"It's this way, Watson," said he at last. "We may leave the question of who killed John Straker for the instant and confine ourselves to finding out what has become of the horse. Now, supposing that he broke away during or after the tragedy, where could he have gone to? The horse is a very gregarious creature. If left to himself his instincts would have been either to return to King's Pyland or go over to Mapleton. Why should he run wild upon the moor? He would surely have been seen by now. And why should gypsies kidnap him? These people always clear out when they hear of trouble, for they do not wish to be pestered by the police. They could not hope to sell such a horse. They would run a great risk and gain nothing by taking him. Surely that is clear."

"Where is he, then?"

"I have already said that he must have gone to King's Pyland or to Mapleton. He is not at King's Pyland. Therefore he is at Mapleton. Let us take that as a working hypothesis and see what it leads us to. This part of the moor, as the inspector remarked, is very hard and dry. But it falls away toward Mapleton, and you can see from here that there is a long hollow over yonder, which must have been very wet



on Monday night. If our supposition is correct, then the horse must have crossed that, and there is the point where we should look for his tracks."

We had been walking briskly during this conversation, and a few more minutes brought us to the hollow in question. At Holmes's request I walked down the bank to the right, and he to the left, but I had not taken fifty paces before I heard him give a shout and saw him waving his hand to me. The track of a horse was plainly outlined in the soft earth in front of him, and the shoe which he took from his pocket exactly fitted the impression.

"See the value of imagination," said Holmes. "It is the one quality which Gregory lacks. We imagined what might have happened, acted upon the supposition, and find ourselves justified. Let us proceed."

We crossed the marshy bottom and passed over a quarter of a mile of dry, hard turf. Again the ground sloped, and again we came on the tracks. Then we lost them for half a mile, but only to pick them up once more quite close to Mapleton. It was Holmes who saw them first, and he stood pointing with a look of triumph upon his face. A man's track was visible beside the horse's.

"The horse was alone before," I cried.

"Quite so. It was alone before. Hullo, what is this?"

The double track turned sharp off and took the direction of King's Pyland. Holmes whistled, and we both followed along after it. His eyes were on the trail, but I happened to look a little to one side and saw to my surprise the same tracks coming back again in the opposite direction.

"One for you, Watson," said Holmes when I pointed it out. "You have saved us a long walk, which would have brought us back on our own traces. Let us follow the return track."

We had not to go far. It ended at the paving of asphalt which led up to the gates of the Mapleton stables. As we approached, a groom ran out from them.

"We don't want any loiterers about here," said he.

"I only wished to ask a question," said Holmes, with his finger and thumb in his waistcoat pocket. "Should I be too early to see your master, Mr. Silas Brown, if I were to call at five o'clock tomorrow morning?"

"Bless you, sir, if anyone is about he will be, for he is always the first stirring. But here he is, sir, to answer your questions for himself. No, sir, no, it is as much as my place is worth to let him see me touch your money. Afterward, if you like."

As Sherlock Holmes replaced the half-crown which he had drawn

from his pocket, a fierce-looking elderly man strode out from the gate with a hunting crop swinging in his hand.

"What's this, Dawson!" he cried. "No gossiping! Go about your business! And you, what the devil do you want here?"

"Ten minutes' talk with you, my good sir," said Holmes in the sweetest of voices.

"I've no time to talk to every gadabout. We want no strangers here. Be off, or you may find a dog at your heels."

Holmes leaned forward and whispered something in the trainer's ear. He started violently and flushed to the temples.

"It's a lie!" he shouted. "An infernal lie!"

"Very good. Shall we argue about it here in public or talk it over in your parlor?"

"Oh, come in if you wish to."

Holmes smiled. "I shall not keep you more than a few minutes, Watson," said he. "Now, Mr. Brown, I am quite at your disposal."

It was twenty minutes, and the reds had all faded into grays before Holmes and the trainer reappeared. Never have I seen such a change as had been brought about in Silas Brown in that short time. His face was ashy pale, beads of perspiration shone upon his brow, and his hands shook until the hunting crop wagged like a branch in the wind. His bullying, overbearing manner was all gone too, and he cringed along at my companion's side like a dog with its master.

"Your instructions will be done. It shall all be done," said he.

"There must be no mistake," said Holmes, looking round at him. The other winced as he read the menace in his eyes.

"Oh, no, there shall be no mistake. It shall be there. Should I change it first or not?"

Holmes thought a little and then burst out laughing. "No, don't," said he, "I shall write to you about it. No tricks, now, or—"

"Oh, you can trust me, you can trust me!"

"Yes, I think I can. Well, you shall hear from me tomorrow." He turned upon his heel, disregarding the trembling hand which the other held out to him, and we set off for King's Pyland.

"A more perfect compound of the bully, coward, and sneak than Master Silas Brown I have seldom met with," remarked Holmes as we trudged along together.

"He has the horse, then?"

"He tried to bluster out of it, but I described to him so exactly what his actions had been upon that morning that he is convinced that I was watching him. Of course you observed the peculiarly square toes in the impressions, and that his own boots exactly corresponded

to them. Again, of course no subordinate would have dared to do such a thing. I described to him how, when according to his custom he was the first down, he perceived a strange horse wandering over the moor. How he went out to it, and his astonishment at recognizing, from the white forehead which has given the favorite its name, that chance had put in his power the only horse which could beat the one upon which he had put his money. Then I described how his first impulse had been to lead him back to King's Pyland, and how the devil had shown him how he could hide the horse until the race was over, and how he had led it back and concealed it at Mapleton. When I told him every detail he gave it up and thought only of saving his own skin."

"But his stables had been searched?"

"Oh, an old horse faker like him has many a dodge."

"But are you not afraid to leave the horse in his power now, since he has every interest in injuring it?"

"My dear fellow, he will guard it as the apple of his eye. He knows that his only hope of mercy is to produce it safe."

"Colonel Ross did not impress me as a man who would be likely to show much mercy in any case."

"The matter does not rest with Colonel Ross. I follow my own methods and tell as much or as little as I choose. That is the advantage of being unofficial. I don't know whether you observed it, Watson, but the colonel's manner has been just a trifle cavalier to me. I am inclined now to have a little amusement at his expense. Say nothing to him about the horse."

"Certainly not without your permission."

"And of course this is all quite a minor point compared to the question of who killed John Straker."

"And you will devote yourself to that?"

"On the contrary, we both go back to London by the night train."

I was thunderstruck by my friend's words. We had only been a few hours in Devonshire, and that he should give up an investigation which he had begun so brilliantly was quite incomprehensible to me. Not a word more could I draw from him until we were back at the trainer's house. The colonel and the inspector were awaiting us in the parlor.

"My friend and I return to town by the night express," said Holmes. "We have had a charming little breath of your beautiful Dartmoor air."

The inspector opened his eyes, and the colonel's lip curled in a sneer.

"So you despair of arresting the murderer of poor Straker," said he.

Holmes shrugged his shoulders. "There are certainly grave difficulties in the way," said he. "I have every hope, however, that your horse will start upon Tuesday, and I beg that you will have your jockey in readiness. Might I ask for a photograph of Mr. John Straker?"

The inspector took one from an envelope and handed it to him.

"My dear Gregory, you anticipate all my wants. If I might ask you to wait here for an instant, I have a question which I should like to put to the maid."

"I must say that I am rather disappointed in our London consultant," said Colonel Ross bluntly as my friend left the room. "I do not see that we are any further than when he came."

"At least you have his assurance that your horse will run," said I.

"Yes, I have his assurance," said the colonel with a shrug of his shoulders. "I should prefer to have the horse."

I was about to make some reply in defense of my friend when he entered the room again.

"Now, gentlemen," said he, "I am quite ready for Tavistock."

As we stepped into the carriage one of the stable lads held the door open for us. A sudden idea seemed to occur to Holmes, for he leaned forward and touched the lad upon the sleeve.

"You have a few sheep in the paddock," he said. "Who attends to them?"

"I do, sir."

"Have you noticed anything amiss with them of late?"

"Well, sir, not of much account, but three of them have gone lame, sir."

I could see that Holmes was extremely pleased, for he chuckled and rubbed his hands together.

"A long shot, Watson, a very long shot," said he, pinching my arm. "Gregory, let me recommend to your attention this singular epidemic among the sheep. Drive on, coachman!"

Colonel Ross still wore an expression which showed the poor opinion which he had formed of my companion's ability, but I saw by the inspector's face that his attention had been keenly aroused.

"You consider that to be important?" he asked.

"Exceedingly so."

"Is there any point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"

"To the curious incident of the dog in the nighttime."

"The dog did nothing in the nighttime."

"That was the curious incident," remarked Sherlock Holmes.

Four days later Holmes and I were again in the train, bound for Winchester to see the race for the Wessex Cup. Colonel Ross met us by appointment outside the station, and we drove in his drag to the course beyond the town. His face was grave, and his manner was cold in the extreme.

"I have seen nothing of my horse," said he.

"I suppose that you would know him when you saw him?" asked Holmes.

The colonel was very angry. "I have been on the turf for twenty years and never was asked such a question as that before," said he. "A child would know Silver Blaze with his white forehead and his mottled off-foreleg."

"How is the betting?"

"Well, that is the curious part of it. You could have got fifteen to one yesterday, but the price has become shorter and shorter, until you can hardly get three to one now."

"Huni!" said Holmes. "Somebody knows something, that is clear."

As the drag drew up in the enclosure near the grandstand I glanced at the card to see the entries.

Wessex Plate [it ran] 50 sovs each h ft with 1000 sovs added, for four and five year olds. Second, £300. Third, £200 New course (one mile and five furlongs).

1. Mr Heath Newton's The Negro Red cap. Cinnamon jacket.
2. Colonel Wardlaw's Pugilist Pink cap Blue and black jacket.
3. Lord Backwater's Desborough Yellow cap and sleeves.
4. Colonel Ross's Silver Blaze. Black cap Red jacket
5. Duke of Balmoral's Iris. Yellow and black stripes.
6. Lord Singleford's Rasper. Purple cap. Black sleeves.

"We scratched our other one and put all hopes on your word," said the colonel. "Why, what is that? Silver Blaze favorite?"

"Five to four against Silver Blaze!" roared the ring. "Five to four against Silver Blaze! Five to fifteen against Desborough! Five to four on the field!"

"There are the numbers up," I cried. "They are all six there."

"All six there? Then my horse is running," cried the colonel in great agitation. "But I don't see him. My colors have not passed."

"Only five have passed. This must be he."

As I spoke a powerful bay horse swept out from the weighing enclosure and cantered past us, bearing on its back the well-known black and red of the colonel.

"That's not my horse," cried the owner. "That beast has not a white hair upon its body. What is this that you have done, Mr. Holmes?"

"Well, well, let us see how he gets on," said my friend imperturbably. For a few minutes he gazed through my field glass. "Capital! An excellent start!" he cried suddenly. "There they are, coming round the curve!"

From our drag we had a superb view as they came up the straight. The six horses were so close together that a carpet could have covered them, but halfway up, the yellow of the Mapleton stable showed to the front. Before they reached us, however, Desborough's bolt was shot, and the colonel's horse, coming away with a rush, passed the post a good six lengths before its rival, the Duke of Balmoral's Iris making a bad third.

"It's my race, anyhow," gasped the colonel, passing his hand over his eyes. "I confess that I can make neither head nor tail of it. Don't you think that you have kept up your mystery long enough, Mr. Holmes?"

"Certainly, Colonel, you shall know everything. Let us all go round and have a look at the horse together. Here he is," he continued as we made our way into the weighing enclosure, where only owners and their friends find admittance. "You have only to wash his face and his leg in spirits of wine, and you will find that he is the same old Silver Blaze as ever."

"You take my breath away!"

"I found him in the hands of a faker and took the liberty of running him just as he was sent over."

"My dear sir, you have done wonders. The horse looks very fit and well. It never went better in its life. I owe you a thousand apologies for having doubted your ability. You have done me a great service by recovering my horse. You would do me a greater still if you could lay your hands on the murderer of John Straker."

"I have done so," said Holmes quietly.

The colonel and I stared at him in amazement. "You have got him! Where is he, then?"

"He is here."

"Here! Where?"

"In my company at the present moment."

The colonel flushed angrily. "I quite recognize that I am under obligations to you, Mr. Holmes," said he, "but I must regard what you have just said as either a very bad joke or an insult."

Sherlock Holmes laughed. "I assure you that I have not associated you with the crime, Colonel," said he. "The real murderer is standing immediately behind you." He stepped past and laid his hand upon the glossy neck of the thoroughbred.

"The horse!" cried both the colonel and myself.

"Yes, the horse. And it may lessen his guilt if I say that it was done in self-defense, and that John Straker was a man who was entirely unworthy of your confidence. But there goes the bell, and as I stand to win a little on this next race, I shall defer a lengthy explanation until a more fitting time."

We had the corner of a Pullman car to ourselves that evening as we whirled back to London, and I fancy that the journey was a short one to Colonel Ross as well as to myself as we listened to our companion's narrative of the events which had occurred at the Dartmoor training stables upon that Monday night, and the means by which he had unraveled them.

"I confess," said he, "that any theories which I had formed from the newspaper reports were entirely erroneous. And yet there were indications there, had they not been overlaid by other details which concealed their true import. I went to Devonshire with the conviction that Fitzroy Simpson was the true culprit, although, of course, I saw that the evidence against him was by no means complete. It was while I was in the carriage, just as we reached the trainer's house, that the immense significance of the curried mutton occurred to me. You may remember that I was distraught and remained sitting after you had all alighted. I was marveling in my own mind how I could possibly have overlooked so obvious a clue."

"I confess," said the colonel, "that even now I cannot see how it helps us."

"It was the first link in my chain of reasoning. Powdered opium is by no means tasteless. The flavor is not disagreeable, but it is perceptible. Were it mixed with any ordinary dish the eater would undoubtedly detect it and would probably eat no more. A curry was exactly the medium which would disguise this taste. By no possible supposition could this stranger, Fitzroy Simpson, have caused curry to be served in the trainer's family that night, and it is surely too monstrous a coincidence to suppose that he happened to come along with powdered opium upon the very night when a dish happened to be served which would disguise the flavor. That is unthinkable.

Therefore Simpson becomes eliminated from the case, and our attention centers upon Straker and his wife, the only two people who could have chosen curried mutton for supper that night. The opium was added after the dish was set aside for the stableboy, for the others had the same for supper with no ill effects. Which of them, then, had access to that dish without the maid seeing them?

"Before deciding that question I had grasped the significance of the silence of the dog, for one true inference invariably suggests others. The Simpson incident had shown me that a dog was kept in the stables, and yet, though someone had been in and had fetched out a horse, he had not barked enough to arouse the two lads in the loft. Obviously the midnight visitor was someone whom the dog knew well.

"I was already convinced, or almost convinced, that John Straker went down to the stables in the dead of the night and took out Silver Blaze. For what purpose? For a dishonest one, obviously, or why should he drug his own stableboy? And yet I was at a loss to know why. There have been cases before now where trainers have made sure of great sums of money by laying against their own horses through agents and then preventing them from winning by fraud. Sometimes it is a pulling jockey. Sometimes it is some surer and subtler means. What was it here? I hoped that the contents of his pockets might help me to form a conclusion.

"And they did so. You cannot have forgotten the singular knife which was found in the dead man's hand, a knife which certainly no sane man would choose for a weapon. It was, as Dr. Watson told us, a form of knife which is used for the most delicate operations known in surgery. And it was to be used for a delicate operation that night. You must know, with your wide experience of turf matters, Colonel Ross, that it is possible to make a slight nick upon the tendons of a horse's ham, and to do it subcutaneously, so as to leave absolutely no trace. A horse so treated would develop a slight lameness, which would be put down to a strain in exercise or a touch of rheumatism, but never to foul play."

"Villain! Scoundrel!" cried the colonel.

"We have here the explanation of why John Straker wished to take the horse out onto the moor. So spirited a creature would have certainly roused the soundest of sleepers when it felt the prick of the knife. It was absolutely necessary to do it in the open air."

"I have been blind!" cried the colonel. "Of course that was why he needed the candle and struck the match."

"Undoubtedly. But in examining his belongings I was fortunate enough to discover not only the method of the crime but even its mo-



tives. As a man of the world, Colonel, you know that men do not carry other people's bills about in their pockets. We have most of us quite enough to do to settle our own. I at once concluded that Straker was leading a double life and keeping a second establishment. The nature of the bill showed that there was a lady in the case, and one who had expensive tastes. Liberal as you are with your servants, one can hardly expect that they can buy twenty-guinea walking dresses for their ladies. I questioned Mrs. Straker as to the dress without her knowing it, and, having satisfied myself that it had never reached her, I made a note of the milliner's address and felt that by calling there with Straker's photograph I could easily dispose of the mythical Derbyshire.

"From that time on all was plain. Straker had led out the horse to a hollow where his light would be invisible. Simpson in his flight had dropped his cravat, and Straker had picked it up—with some idea, perhaps, that he might use it in securing the horse's leg. Once in the hollow, he had got behind the horse and had struck a light; but the creature, frightened at the sudden glare, and with the strange instinct of animals feeling that some mischief was intended, had lashed out, and the steel shoe had struck Straker full on the forehead. He had already, in spite of the rain, taken off his overcoat in order to do his delicate task, and so, as he fell, his knife gashed his thigh. Do I make it clear?"

"Wonderful!" cried the colonel. "Wonderful! You might have been there!"

"My final shot was, I confess, a very long one. It struck me that so astute a man as Straker would not undertake this delicate tendon-nicking without a little practice. What could he practice on? My eyes fell upon the sheep, and I asked a question which, rather to my surprise, showed that my surmise was correct.

"When I returned to London I called upon the milliner, who recognized Straker as an excellent customer of the name of Derbyshire, who had a very dashing wife, with a strong partiality for expensive dresses. I have no doubt that this woman had plunged him over head and ears in debt, and so led him into this miserable plot."

"You have explained all but one thing," cried the colonel. "Where was the horse?"

"Ah, it bolted, and was cared for by one of your neighbors. We must have an amnesty in that direction, I think. This is Clapham Junction, if I am not mistaken, and we shall be in Victoria in less than ten minutes. If you care to smoke a cigar in our rooms, Colonel, I shall be happy to give you any other details which might interest you."

# A PIECE OF STEAK

by JACK LONDON

(1911)

*It was a drought year in Australia times were hard even irregular work difficult to find and Tom King was hungry A man can't fight on an empty stomach, and Tom King needed better food than he was getting if he was to whip Sandel in the ring which he had to These were the days when winner took all—the losers and wouldn't pay for the ride home on the train This situation sets the scene for a typical Jack London story A Piece of Steak Here is realism as opposed to romanticism in sports story writing and economic realism was a quality that London frequently featured Incidentally at the time this story was written he was probably the most widely read author in the world*

WITH THE last morsel of bread Tom King wiped his plate clean of the last particle of flour gravy and chewed the resulting mouthful in a slow and meditative way When he arose from the table, he was oppressed by the feeling that he was distinctly hungry Yet he alone had eaten The two children in the other room had been sent early to bed in order that in sleep they might forget they had gone supperless His wife had touched nothing, and had sat silently and watched him with solicitous eyes She was a thin, worn woman of the working class, though signs of an earlier prettiness were not

wanting in her face. The flour for the gravy she had borrowed from the neighbor across the hall. The last two ha'pennies had gone to buy the bread.

He sat down by the window on a rickety chair that protested under his weight, and quite mechanically he put his pipe in his mouth and dipped into the side pocket of his coat. The absence of any tobacco made him aware of his action, and, with a scowl for his forgetfulness, he put the pipe away. His movements were slow, almost hulking, as though he were burdened by the heavy weight of his muscles. He was a solid-bodied, stolid-looking man, and his appearance did not suffer from being overprepossessing. His rough clothes were old and slouchy. The uppers of his shoes were too weak to carry the heavy resoling that was itself of no recent date. And his cotton shirt, a cheap, two-shilling affair, showed a frayed collar and ineradicable paint stains.

But it was Tom King's face that advertised him unmistakably for what he was. It was the face of a typical prize fighter, of one who had put in long years of service in the squared ring and, by that means, developed and emphasized all the marks of the fighting beast. It was distinctly a lowering countenance, and, that no feature of it might escape notice, it was clean-shaven. The lips were shapeless and constituted a mouth harsh to excess, that was like a gash in his face. The jaw was aggressive, brutal, heavy. The eyes, slow of movement and heavy lidded, were almost expressionless under the shaggy, indrawn brows. Such animal that he was, the eyes were the most animal-like feature about him. They were sleepy, lionlike—the eyes of a fighting animal. The forehead slanted quickly back to the hair, which, clipped close, showed every bump of a villainous-looking head. A nose, twice broken and molded variously by countless blows, and a cauliflower ear, permanently swollen and distorted to twice its size, completed his adornment, while the beard, fresh-shaven as it was, sprouted in the skin and gave the face a blue-black stain.

All together, it was the face of a man to be afraid of in a dark alley or lonely place. And yet Tom King was not a criminal, nor had he ever done anything criminal. Outside of brawls, common to his walk in life, he had harmed no one. Nor had he ever been known to pick a quarrel. He was a professional, and all the fighting brutishness of him was reserved for his professional appearances. Outside the ring he was slow-going, easy-natured, and, in his younger days, when money was flush, too openhanded for his own good. He bore no

grudges and had few enemies. Fighting was a business with him. In the ring he struck to hurt, struck to maim, struck to destroy; but there was no animus in it. It was a plain business proposition. Audiences assembled and paid for the spectacle of men knocking each other out. The winner took the big end of the purse. When Tom King faced the Woolloomoolloo Gouger, twenty years before, he knew that the Gouger's jaw was only four months healed after having been broken in a Newcastle bout. And he had played for that jaw and broken it again in the ninth round, not because he bore the Gouger any ill will, but because that was the surest way to put the Gouger out and win the big end of the purse. Nor had the Gouger borne him any ill will for it. It was the game, and both knew the game and played it.

Tom King had never been a talker, and he sat by the window, morosely silent, staring at his hands. The veins stood out on the backs of the hands, large and swollen; and the knuckles, smashed and battered and malformed testified to the use to which they had been put. He had never heard that a man's life was the life of his arteries, but well he knew the meaning of those big, upstanding veins. His heart had pumped too much blood through them at top pressure. They no longer did the work. He had stretched the elasticity out of them, and with their distention had passed his endurance. He tired easily now. No longer could he do a fast twenty rounds, hammer and tongs, fight, fight, fight, from gong to gong, with fierce rally on top of fierce rally, beaten to the ropes and in turn beating his opponent to the ropes, and rallying fiercest and fastest of all in that last, twentieth round, with the house on its feet and yelling, himself rushing, striking, ducking, raining showers of blows upon showers of blows and receiving showers of blows in return, and all the time the heart faithfully pumping the surging blood through the adequate veins. The veins, swollen at the time, had always shrunk down again, though not quite—each time, imperceptibly at first, remaining just a trifle larger than before. He stared at them and at his battered knuckles, and, for the moment, caught a vision of the youthful excellence of those hands, before the first knuckle had been smashed on the head of Benny Jones, otherwise known as the Welsh Terror.

The impression of his hunger came back on him.

"Blimey, but couldn't I go a piece of steak!" he muttered aloud, clenching his huge fists and spitting out a smothered oath.

"I tried both Burke's an' Sawley's," his wife said half apologetically.

"An' they wouldn't?" he demanded.

"Not a ha'penny. Burke said—" She faltered.

"G'wan! Wot'd he say?"

"As how 'e was thinkin' Sandel ud do ye tonight, an' as how yer score was comfortable big as it was."

Tom King grunted but did not reply. He was busy thinking of the bull terrier he had kept in his younger days to which he had fed steaks without end. Burke would have given him credit for a thousand steaks—then. But times had changed. Tom King was getting old; and old men, fighting before second-rate clubs, couldn't expect to run bills of any size with the tradesmen.

He had got up in the morning with a longing for a piece of steak, and the longing had not abated. He had not had a fair training for this fight. It was a drought year in Australia, times were hard, and even the most irregular work was difficult to find. He had had no sparring partner, and his food had not been of the best nor always sufficient. He had done a few days' navvy work when he could get it, and he had run around the Domain in the early mornings to get his legs in shape. But it was hard, training without a partner and with a wife and two kiddies that must be fed. Credit with the tradesmen had undergone very slight expansion when he was matched with Sandel. The secretary of the Gaiety Club had advanced him three pounds—the loser's end of the purse—and beyond that had refused to go. Now and again he had managed to borrow a few shillings from old pals, who would have lent more only that it was a drought year and they were hard put themselves. No—and there was no use in disguising the fact—his training had not been satisfactory. He should have had better food and no worries. Besides, when a man is forty, it is harder to get into condition than when he is twenty.

"What time is it, Lizzie?" he asked.

His wife went across the hall to inquire and came back.

"Quarter before eight."

"They'll be startin' the first bout in a few minutes," he said. "Only a tryout. Then there's a four-round spar 'tween Dealer Wells an' Gridley, an' a ten-round go 'tween Starlight an' some sailor bloke. I don't come on for over an hour."

At the end of another silent ten minutes, he rose to his feet.

"Truth is, Lizzie, I ain't had proper trainin'."

He reached for his hat and started for the door. He did not offer to kiss her—he never did on going out—but on this night she dared to

kiss him, throwing her arms around him and compelling him to bend down to her face. She looked quite small against the massive bulk of the man.

"Good luck, Tom," she said. "You gotter do 'im."

"Ay, I gotter do 'im," he repeated. "That's all there is to it. I jus' gotter do 'im."

He laughed with an attempt at heartiness, while she pressed more closely against him. Across her shoulders he looked around the bare room. It was all he had in the world, with the rent overdue, and her and the kiddies. And he was leaving it to go out into the night to get meat for his mate and cubs—not like a modern workingman going to his machine grind, but in the old, primitive, royal, animal way, by fighting for it.

"I gotter do 'im," he repeated, this time a hint of desperation in his voice. "If it's a win, it's thirty quid—an' I can pay all that's owin', with a lump o' money left over. If it's a lose, I get naught—not even a penny for me to ride home on the tram. The secretary's give all that's comin' from a loser's end. Good-by, old woman. I'll come straight home if it's a win."

"An' I'll be waitin' up," she called to him along the hall.

It was full two miles to the Gaiety, and as he walked along he remembered how in his palmy days—he had once been the heavy-weight champion of New South Wales—he would have ridden in a cab to the fight, and how, most likely, some heavy backer would have paid for the cab and ridden with him. There were Tommy Burns and that Yankee nigger, Jack Johnson—they rode about in motorcars. And he walked! And, as any man knew, a hard two miles was not the best preliminary to a fight. He was an old un, and the world did not wag well with old uns. He was good for nothing now except navvy work, and his broken nose and swollen ear were against him even in that. He found himself wishing that he had learned a trade. It would have been better in the long run. But no one had told him, and he knew, deep down in his heart, that he would not have listened if they had. It had been so easy. Big money—sharp, glorious fights—periods of rest and loafing in between—a following of eager flatterers, the slaps on the back, the shakes of the hand, the toffs glad to buy him a drink for the privilege of five minutes' talk—and the glory of it, the yelling houses, the whirlwind finish, the referee's "King wins!" and his name in the sporting columns next day.

Those had been times! But he realized now, in his slow, ruminating

way, that it was the old uns he had been putting away. He was Youth, rising; and they were Age, sinking. No wonder it had been easy—they with their swollen veins and battered knuckles and weary in the bones of them from the long battles they had already fought. He remembered the time he put out old Stowsher Bill, at Rush-Cutters Bay, in the eighteenth round, and how old Bill had cried afterward in the dressing room like a baby. Perhaps old Bill's rent had been overdue. Perhaps he'd had at home a missus an' a couple of kiddies. And perhaps Bill, that very day of the fight, had had a hungering for a piece of steak. Bill had fought game and taken incredible punishment. He could see now, after he had gone through the mill himself, that Stowsher Bill had fought for a bigger stake, that night twenty years ago, than had young Tom King, who had fought for glory and easy money. No wonder Stowsher Bill had cried afterward in the dressing room.

Well, a man had only so many fights in him, to begin with. It was the iron law of the game. One man might have a hundred hard fights in him, another man only twenty; each, according to the make of him and the quality of his fiber, had a definite number, and, when he had fought them, he was done. Yes, he had had more fights in him than most of them, and he had had far more than his share of the hard, grueling fights—the kind that worked the heart and lungs to bursting, that took the elastic out of the arteries and made hard knots of muscle out of Youth's sleek suppleness, that wore out nerve and stamina and made brain and bones weary from excess of effort and endurance overwrought. Yes, he had done better than all of them. There was none of his old fighting partners left. He was the last of the old guard. He had seen them all finished, and he had had a hand in finishing some of them.

They had tried him out against the old uns, and one after another he had put them away—laughing when, like old Stowsher Bill, they cried in the dressing room. And now he was an old un, and they tried out the youngsters on him. There was that bloke, Sandel. He had come over from New Zealand with a record behind him. But nobody in Australia knew anything about him, so they put him up against old Tom King. If Sandel made a showing, he would be given better men to fight, with bigger purses to win; so it was to be depended upon that he would put up a fierce battle. He had everything to win by it—money and glory and career; and Tom King was the grizzled old chopping block that guarded the highway to fame and fortune. And

he had nothing to win except thirty quid, to pay to the landlord and the tradesmen. And, as Tom King thus ruminated, there came to his stolid vision the form of Youth, glorious Youth, rising exultant and invincible, supple of muscle and silken of skin, with heart and lungs that had never been tired and torn and that laughed at limitation of effort. Yes, Youth was the Nemesis. It destroyed the old uns and recked not that, in so doing, it destroyed itself. It enlarged its arteries and smashed its knuckles and was in turn destroyed by Youth. For Youth was ever youthful. It was only Age that grew old.

At Castlereagh Street he turned to the left, and three blocks along came to the Gaiety. A crowd of young larrikins hanging outside the door made respectful way for him, and he heard one say to another: "That's 'im! That's Tom King!"

Inside, on the way to his dressing room, he encountered the secretary, a keen-eyed, shrewd-faced young man, who shook his hand.

"How are you feelin', Tom?" he asked.

"Fit as a fiddle," King answered, though he knew that he lied, and that if he had a quid, he would give it right there for a good piece of steak.

When he emerged from the dressing room, his seconds behind him, and came down the aisle to the squared ring in the center of the hall, a burst of greeting and applause went up from the waiting crowd. He acknowledged salutations right and left, though few of the faces did he know. Most of them were the faces of kiddies unborn when he was winning his first laurels in the squared ring. He leaped lightly to the raised platform and ducked through the ropes to his corner, where he sat down on a folding stool. Jack Ball, the referee, came over and shook his hand. Ball was a broken-down pugilist who for over ten years had not entered the ring as a principal. King was glad that he had him for referee. They were both old uns. If he should rough it with Sandel a bit beyond the rules, he knew Ball could be depended upon to pass it by.

Aspiring young heavyweights, one after another, were climbing into the ring and being presented to the audience by the referee. Also, he issued their challenges for them.

"Young Pronto," Bill announced, "from North Sydney, challenges the winner for fifty pounds side bet."

The audience applauded, and applauded again as Sandel himself sprang through the ropes and sat down in his corner. Tom King looked across the ring at him curiously, for in a few minutes they



would be locked together in merciless combat, each trying with all the force of him to knock the other into unconsciousness. But little could he see, for Sandel, like himself, had trousers and sweater on over his ring costume. His face was strongly handsome, crowned with a curly mop of yellow hair, while his thick, muscular neck hinted at bodily magnificence.

Young Pronto went to one corner and then the other, shaking hands with the principals and dropping down out of the ring. The challenges went on. Ever Youth climbed through the ropes—Youth unknown, but insatiable—crying out to mankind 'hat with strength and skill it would match issues with the winner. A few years before, in his own heyday of invincibleness, Tom King would have been amused and bored by these preliminaries. But now he sat fascinated, unable to shake the vision of Youth from his eyes. Always were these youngsters rising up in the boxing game, springing through the ropes and shouting their defiance; and always were the old uns going down before them. They climbed to success over the bodies of the old uns. And ever they came, more and more youngsters—Youth unquenchable and irresistible—and ever they put the old uns away, themselves becoming old uns and traveling the same downward path, while behind them, ever pressing on them, was Youth eternal—the new babies, grown lusty and dragging their elders down, with behind them more babies to the end of time—Youth that must have its will and that will never die.

King glanced over to the press box and nodded to Morgan, of the *Sportsman*, and Corbett, of the *Referee*. Then he held out his hands, while Sid Sullivan and Charley Bates, his seconds, slipped on his gloves and laced them tight, closely watched by one of Sandel's seconds, who first examined critically the tapes on King's knuckles. A second of his own was in Sandel's corner, performing a like office. Sandel's trousers were pulled off, and, as he stood up, his sweater was skinned off over his head. And Tom King, looking, saw Youth incarnate, deep-chested, heavy-thewed, with muscles that slipped and slid like live things under the white satin skin. The whole body was acrawl with life, and Tom King knew that it was a life that had never oozed its freshness out through the aching pores during the long fights wherein Youth paid its toll and departed not quite so young as when it entered.

The two men advanced to meet each other, and, as the gong sounded and the seconds clattered out of the ring with the folding

stools, they shook hands and instantly took their fighting attitudes. And instantly, like a mechanism of steel and springs balanced on a hair trigger, Sandel was in and out and in again, landing a left to the eyes, a right to the ribs, ducking a counter, dancing lightly away and dancing menacingly back again. He was swift and clever. It was a dazzling exhibition. The house yelled its approbation. But King was not dazzled. He had fought too many fights and too many youngsters. He knew the blows for what they were—too quick and too deft to be dangerous. Evidently Sandel was going to rush things from the start. It was to be expected. It was the way of Youth, expending its splendor and excellence in wild insurgence and furious onslaught, overwhelming opposition with its own unlimited glory of strength and desire.

Sandel was in and out, here, there, and everywhere, light-footed and eager-hearted, a living wonder of white flesh and stinging muscle that wove itself into a dazzling fabric of attack, slipping and leaping like a flying shuttle from action to action through a thousand actions, all of them centered upon the destruction of Tom King, who stood between him and fortune. And Tom King patiently endured. He knew his business, and he knew Youth now that Youth was no longer his. There was nothing to do till the other lost some of his steam, was his thought, and he grinned to himself as he deliberately ducked so as to receive a heavy blow on the top of his head. It was a wicked thing to do, yet eminently fair according to the rules of the boxing game. A man was supposed to take care of his own knuckles, and, if he insisted on hitting an opponent on the top of the head, he did so at his own peril. King could have ducked lower and let the blow whiz harmlessly past, but he remembered his own early fights and how he smashed his first knuckle on the head of the Welsh Terror. He was but playing the game. That duck had accounted for one of Sandel's knuckles. Not that Sandel would mind it now. He would go on, superbly regardless, hitting as hard as ever throughout the fight. But later on, when the long ring battles had begun to tell, he would regret that knuckle and look back and remember how he smashed it on Tom King's head.

The first round was all Sandel's, and he had the house yelling with the rapidity of his whirlwind rushes. He overwhelmed King with avalanches of punches, and King did nothing. He never struck once, contenting himself with covering up, blocking and ducking and clinching to avoid punishment. He occasionally feinted, shook his

head when the weight of a punch landed, and moved stolidly about, never leaping or springing or wasting an ounce of strength. Sandel must foam the froth of Youth away before discreet Age could dare to retaliate. All King's movements were slow and methodical, and his heavy-lidded, slow-moving eyes gave him the appearance of being half asleep or dazed. Yet they were eyes that saw everything, that had been trained to see everything through all his twenty years and odd in the ring. They were eyes that did not blink or waver before an impending blow, but that coolly saw and measured distance.

Seated in his corner for the minute's rest at the end of the round, he lay back with outstretched legs, his arms resting on the right angle of the ropes, his chest and abdomen heaving frankly and deeply as he gulped down the air driven by the towels of his seconds. He listened with closed eyes to the voices of the house, "Why don't yeh fight, Tom?" many were crying. "Yeh ain't afraid of 'im, are yeh?"

"Muscle-bound," he heard a man on a front seat comment. "He can't move quicker. Two to one on Sandel, in quid."

The gong struck and the two men advanced from their corners. Sandel came forward fully three quarters of the distance, eager to begin again; but King was content to advance the shorter distance. It was in line with his policy of economy. He had not been well trained, and he had not had enough to eat, and every step counted. Besides, he had already walked two miles to the ringside. It was a repetition of the first round, with Sandel attacking like a whirlwind and with the audience indignantly demanding why King did not fight. Beyond feinting and several slowly delivered and ineffectual blows he did nothing save block and stall and clinch. Sandel wanted to make the pace fast, while King, out of his wisdom, refused to accommodate him. He grinned with a certain wistful pathos in his ring-battered countenance, and went on cherishing his strength with the jealousy of which only Age is capable. Sandel was Youth, and he threw his strength away with the munificent abandon of Youth. To King belonged the ring generalship, the wisdom bred of long, aching fights. He watched with cool eyes and head, moving slowly and waiting for Sandel's froth to foam away. To the majority of the onlookers it seemed as though King was hopelessly outclassed, and they voiced their opinion in offers of three to one on Sandel. But there were wise ones, a few, who knew King of old time, and who covered what they considered easy money.

The third round began as usual, one-sided, with Sandel doing all

the leading and delivering all the punishment. A half-minute had passed when Sandel, overconfident, left an opening. King's eyes and right arm flashed in the same instant. It was his first real blow—a hook, with the twisted arch of the arm to make it rigid, and with all the weight of the half-pivoted body behind it. It was like a sleepy-seeming lion suddenly thrusting out a lightning paw. Sandel, caught on the side of the jaw, was felled like a bullock. The audience gasped and murmured awe-stricken applause. The man was not muscle-bound, after all, and he could drive a blow like a trip-hammer.

Sandel was shaken. He rolled over and attempted to rise, but the sharp yells from his seconds to take the count restrained him. He knelt on one knee, ready to rise, and waited, while the referee stood over him, counting the seconds loudly in his ear. At the ninth he rose in fighting attitude, and Tom King, facing him, knew regret that the blow had not been an inch nearer the point of the jaw. That would have been a knockout, and he could have carried the thirty quid home to the missus and the kiddies.

The round continued to the end of its three minutes, Sandel for the first time respectful of his opponent and King slow of movement and sleepy-eyed as ever. As the round neared its close, King, warned of the fact by sight of the seconds crouching outside ready for the spring in through the ropes, worked the fight around to his own corner. And when the gong struck, he sat down immediately on the waiting stool, while Sandel had to walk all the way across the diagonal of the square to his own corner. It was a little thing, but it was the sum of little things that counted. Sandel was compelled to walk that many more steps, to give up that much energy, and to lose a part of the precious minute of rest. At the beginning of every round King loafed slowly out from his corner, forcing his opponent to advance the greater distance. The end of every round found the fight maneuvered by King into his own corner so that he could immediately sit down.

Two more rounds went by, in which King was parsimonious of effort and Sandel prodigal. The latter's attempt to force a fast pace made King uncomfortable, for a fair percentage of the multitudinous blows showered upon him went home. Yet King persisted in his dogged slowness, despite the crying of the young hotheads for him to go in and fight. Again, in the sixth round, Sandel was careless, again Tom King's fearful right flashed out to the jaw, and again Sandel took the nine seconds' count.

By the seventh round Sandel's pink of condition was gone, and he

settled down to what he knew was to be the hardest fight in his experience. Tom King was an old un, but a better old un than he had ever encountered—an old un who never lost his head, who was remarkably able at defense, whose blows had the impact of a knotted club, and who had a knockout in either hand. Nevertheless, Tom King dared not hit often. He never forgot his battered knuckles and knew that every hit must count if the knuckles were to last out the fight. As he sat in his corner, glancing across at his opponent, the thought came to him that the sum of his wisdom and Sandel's youth would constitute a world's champion heavyweight. But that was the trouble. Sandel would never become a world champion. He lacked the wisdom, and the only way for him to get it was to buy it with Youth; and when wisdom was his, Youth would have been spent in buying it.

King took every advantage he knew. He never missed an opportunity to clinch, and in effecting most of the clinches his shoulder drove stiffly into the other's ribs. In the philosophy of the ring a shoulder was as good as a punch so far as damage was concerned, and a great deal better so far as concerned expenditure of effort. Also, in the clinches King rested his weight on his opponent, and was loath to let go. This compelled the interference of the referee, who tore them apart, always assisted by Sandel, who had not yet learned to rest. He could not refrain from using those glorious flying arms and writhing muscles of his, and when the other rushed into a clinch, striking shoulder against ribs, and with head resting under Sandel's left arm, Sandel almost invariably swung his right behind his own back and into the projecting face. It was a clever stroke, much admired by the audience, but it was not dangerous, and was, therefore, just that much wasted strength. But Sandel was tireless and unaware of limitations, and King grinned and doggedly endured.

Sandel developed a fierce right to the body, which made it appear that King was taking an enormous amount of punishment, and it was only the old ringsters who appreciated the deft touch of King's left glove to the other's biceps just before the impact of the blow. It was true, the blow landed each time; but each time it was robbed of its power by that touch on the biceps. In the ninth round, three times inside a minute, King's right hooked its twisted arch to the jaw; and three times Sandel's body, heavy as it was, was leveled to the mat. Each time he took the nine seconds allowed him and rose to his feet, shaken and jarred, but still strong. He had lost much of his speed,

and he wasted less effort. He was fighting grimly; but he continued to draw upon his chief asset, which was Youth. King's chief asset was experience. As his vitality had dimmed and his vigor abated, he had replaced them with cunning, with wisdom born of the long fights and with a careful shepherding of strength. Not alone had he learned never to make a superfluous movement, but he had learned how to seduce an opponent into throwing his strength away. Again and again, by feint of foot and hand and body he continued to inveigle Sandel into leaping back, ducking, or countering. King rested, but he never permitted Sandel to rest. It was the strategy of Age.

Early in the tenth round King began stopping the other's rushes with straight lefts to the face, and Sandel, grown wary, responded by drawing the left, then by ducking it and delivering his right in a swinging hook to the side of the head. It was too high up to be vitally effective; but when first it landed, King knew the old, familiar descent of the black veil of unconsciousness across his mind. For the instant, or for the slightest fraction of an instant, rather, he ceased. In the one moment he saw his opponent ducking out of his field of vision and the background of white, watching faces; in the next moment he again saw his opponent and the background of faces. It was as if he had slept for a time and just opened his eyes again, and yet the interval of unconsciousness was so microscopically short that there had been no time for him to fall. The audience saw him totter and his knees give, and then saw him recover and tuck his chin deeper into the shelter of his left shoulder.

Several times Sandel repeated the blow, keeping King partially dazed, and then the latter worked out his defense, which was also a counter. Feinting with his left he took a half-step backward, at the same time uppercutting with the whole strength of his right. So accurately was it timed that it landed squarely on Sandel's face in the full, downward sweep of the duck, and Sandel lifted in the air and curled backward, striking the mat on his head and shoulders. Twice King achieved this, then turned loose and hammered his opponent to the ropes. He gave Sandel no chance to rest or to set himself, but smashed blow in upon blow till the house rose to its feet and the air was filled with an unbroken roar of applause. But Sandel's strength and endurance were superb, and he continued to stay on his feet. A knockout seemed certain, and a captain of police, appalled at the dreadful punishment arose by the ringside to stop the fight. The gong struck for the end of the round and Sandel staggered to his corner,

protesting to the captain that he was sound and strong. To prove it, he threw two back air springs, and the police captain gave in.

Tom King, leaning back in his corner and breathing hard, was disappointed. If the fight had been stopped, the referee, perforce, would have rendered him the decision and the purse would have been his. Unlike Sandel, he was not fighting for glory or career, but for thirty quid. And now Sandel would recuperate in the minute of rest.

Youth will be served—this saying flashed into King's mind, and he remembered the first time he had heard it, the night when he had put away Stowsher Bill. The toff who had bought him a drink after the fight and patted him on the shoulder had used those words. Youth will be served! The toff was right. And on that night in the long ago he had been Youth. Tonight Youth sat in the opposite corner. As for himself, he had been fighting for half an hour now, and he was an old man. Had he fought like Sandel, he would not have lasted fifteen minutes. But the point was that he did not recuperate. Those up-standing arteries and that sorely tried heart would not enable him to gather strength in the intervals between the rounds. And he had not had sufficient strength in him to begin with. His legs were heavy under him and beginning to cramp. He should not have walked those two miles to the fight. And there was the steak which he had got up longing for that morning. A great and terrible hatred rose up in him for the butchers who had refused him credit. It was hard for an old man to go into a fight without enough to eat. And a piece of steak was such a little thing, a few pennies at best; yet it meant thirty quid to him.

With the gong that opened the eleventh round, Sandel rushed, making a show of freshness which he did not really possess. King knew it for what it was—a bluff as old as the game itself. He clinched to save himself, then going free, allowed Sandel to get set. This was what King desired. He feinted with his left, drew the answering duck and swinging upward hook, then made the halt-step backward, delivered the uppercut full to the face and crumpled Sandel over to the mat. After that he never let him rest, receiving punishment himself, but inflicting far more, smashing Sandel to the ropes, hooking and driving all manner of blows into him, tearing away from his clinches or punching him out of attempted clinches, and ever when Sandel would have fallen, catching him with one uplifting hand and with the other immediately smashing him into the ropes where he could not fall.

The house by this time had gone mad, and it was his house, nearly every voice yelling: "Go it, Tom!" "Get 'im! Get 'im!" "You've got

'im, Tom! You've got 'im!" It was to be a whirlwind finish, and that was what a ringside audience paid to see.

And Tom King, who for half an hour had conserved his strength, now expended it prodigally in the one great effort he knew he had in him. It was his one chance—now or not at all. His strength was waning fast, and his hope was that before the last of it ebbed out of him he would have beaten his opponent down for the count. And as he continued to strike and force, coolly estimating the weight of his blows and the quality of the damage wrought, he realized how hard a man Sandel was to knock out. Stamina and endurance were his to an extreme degree, and they were the virgin stamina and endurance of Youth. Sandel was certainly a coming man. He had it in him. Only out of such rugged fiber were successful fighters fashioned.

Sandel was reeling and staggering, but Tom King's legs were cramping and his knuckles going back on him. Yet he steeled himself to strike the fierce blows, every one of which brought anguish to his tortured hands. Though now he was receiving practically no punishment, he was weakening as rapidly as the other. His blows went home, but there was no longer the weight behind them, and each blow was the result of a severe effort of will. His legs were like lead, and they dragged visibly under him; while Sandel's backers, cheered by this symptom, began calling encouragement to their man.

King was spurred to a burst of effort. He delivered two blows in succession—a left, a trifle too high, to the solar plexus, and a right cross to the jaw. They were not heavy blows, yet so weak and dazed was Sandel that he went down and lay quivering. The referee stood over him, shouting the count of the fatal seconds in his ear. If before the tenth second was called he did not rise, the fight was lost. The house stood in hushed silence. King rested on trembling legs. A mortal dizziness was upon him, and before his eyes the sea of faces sagged and swayed, while to his ears, as from a remote distance, came the count of the referee. Yet he looked upon the fight as his. It was impossible that a man so punished could rise.

Only Youth could rise, and Sandel rose. At the fourth second he rolled over on his face and groped blindly for the ropes. By the seventh second he had dragged himself to his knees, where he rested, his head rolling groggily on his shoulders. As the referee cried "Nine!" Sandel stood upright, in proper stalling position, his left arm wrapped about his face, his right wrapped about his stomach. Thus were his vital points guarded, while he lurched forward toward King in the hope of effecting a clinch and gaining more time.



At the instant Sandel arose, King was at him, but the two blows he delivered were muffled on the stalled arms. The next moment Sandel was in the clinch and holding on desperately while the referee strove to drag the two men apart. King helped to force himself free. He knew the rapidity with which Youth recovered, and he knew that Sandel was his if he could prevent that recovery. One stiff punch would do it. Sandel was his, indubitably his. He had outgeneraled him, outfought him, outpointed him. Sandel reeled out of the clinch, balanced on the hairline between defeat or survival. One good blow would topple him over and down and out. And Tom King, in a flash of bitterness, remembered the piece of steak and wished that he had it then behind that necessary punch he must deliver. He nerved himself for the blow, but it was not heavy enough nor swift enough. Sandel swayed, but did not fall, staggering back to the ropes and holding on. King staggered after him, and, with a pang like that of dissolution, delivered another blow. But his body had deserted him. All that was left of him was a fighting intelligence that was dimmed and clouded from exhaustion. The blow that was aimed for the jaw struck no higher than the shoulder. He had willed the blow higher, but the tired muscles had not been able to obey. And, from the impact of the blow, Tom King himself reeled back and nearly fell. Once again he strove. This time his punch missed altogether, and, from absolute weakness, he fell against Sandel and clinched, holding on to him to save himself from sinking to the floor.

King did not attempt to free himself. He had shot his bolt. He was gone. And Youth had been served. Even in the clinch he could feel Sandel growing stronger against him. When the referee thrust them apart, there, before his eyes, he saw Youth recuperate. From instant to instant Sandel grew stronger. His punches, weak and futile at first, became stiff and accurate. Tom King's bleared eyes saw the gloved fist driving at his jaw, and he willed to guard it by interposing his arm. He saw the danger, willed the act; but the arm was too heavy. It seemed burdened with a hundredweight of lead. It would not lift itself, and he strove to lift it with his soul. Then the gloved fist landed home. He experienced a sharp snap that was like an electric spark, and, simultaneously, the veil of blackness enveloped him.

When he opened his eyes again he was in his corner, and he heard the yelling of the audience like the roar of the surf at Bondi Beach. A wet sponge was being pressed against the base of his brain, and Sid Sullivan was blowing cold water in a refreshing spray over his face

and chest. His gloves had already been removed, and Sandel, bending over him, was shaking his hand. He bore no ill will toward the man who had put him out, and he returned the grip with a heartiness that made his battered knuckles protest. Then Sandel stepped to the center of the ring and the audience hushed its pandemonium to hear him accept Young Pronto's challenge and offer to increase the side bet to one hundred pounds. King looked on apathetically while his seconds mopped the streaming water from him, dried his face, and prepared him to leave the ring. He felt hungry. It was not the ordinary, gnawing kind, but a great faintness, a palpitation at the pit of the stomach that communicated itself to all his body. He remembered back into the fight to the moment when he had Sandel swaying and tottering on the hairline balance of defeat. Ah, that piece of steak would have done it! He had lacked just that for the decisive blow, and he had lost. It was all because of the piece of steak.

His seconds were half supporting him as they helped him through the ropes. He tore free from them, ducked through the ropes unaided, and leaped heavily to the floor, following on their heels as they forced a passage for him down the crowded center aisle. Leaving the dressing room for the street, in the entrance to the hall, some young fellow spoke to him.

"W'y didn't yuh go in an' get 'im when yuh 'ad 'im?" the young fellow asked.

"Aw, go to hell!" said Tom King, and passed down the steps to the sidewalk.

The doors of the public house at the corner were swinging wide, and he saw the lights and the smiling barmaids, heard the many voices discussing the fight and the prosperous chink of money on the bar. Somebody called to him to have a drink. He hesitated perceptibly, then refused and went on his way.

He had not a copper in his pocket, and the two-mile walk home seemed very long. He was certainly getting old. Crossing the Domain, he sat down suddenly on a bench, unnerved by the thought of the missus sitting up for him, waiting to learn the outcome of the fight. That was harder than any knockout, and it seemed almost impossible to face.

He felt weak and sore, and the pain of his smashed knuckles warned him that, even if he could find a job at navvy work, it would be a week before he could grip a pick handle or a shovel. The hunger palpitation at the pit of the stomach was sickening. His wretched-

ness overwhelmed him, and into his eyes came an unwonted moisture. He covered his face with his hands, and, as he cried, he remembered Stowsher Bill and how he had served him that night in the long ago. Poor old Stowsher Bill! He could understand now why Bill had cried in the dressing room.

# TENNIS

by ROGER ANGELL

*Possessing an adeptness for a certain sport is a matter of almost outlandish pride with many men. As they grow older they may philosophically accept gray hair and stronger optical prescriptions, and bow gracefully to the inevitable encroachments of the years. But the once good tennis player (or golfer or participant in other man-to-man sports) frequently cannot tolerate a lowering of the standard of proficiency he once possessed. The effect that this type of vanity can have on the relationship of a father and son and the corollary reaction of the son lie at the heart of Roger Angell's story.*

THE THING you ought to know about my father is that he plays a lovely game of tennis. Or rather, he used to, up to last year, when all of a sudden he had to give the game up for good. But even last summer, when he was fifty-five years of age, his game was something to see. He wasn't playing any of your middle-aged tennis, even then. None of that cute stuff, with lots of cuts and drop shots and getting everything back, that most older men play when they're beginning to carry a little fat and don't like to run so much. That wasn't for him. He still played all or nothing—the big game with a hard serve and coming right in behind it to the net. Lots of running in that kind of game, but he could still do it. Of course, he'd begun to make more errors in the last few years and that would annoy the hell out of

Permission the author.

him. But still he wouldn't change—not him. At that, his game was something to see when he was on. Everybody talked about it. There was always quite a little crowd around his court on the weekends, and when he and the other men would come off the court after a set of doubles, the wives would see their husbands all red and puffing. And then they'd look at my old man and see him grinning and not even breathing hard after *he'd* been doing all the running back after the lobs and putting away those overheads, and they'd say to him, "Honestly, Hugh, I just don't see how you do it, not at your age. It's *amazing!* I'm going to take my Steve [or Bill or Tom] off cigarettes and put him on a diet. He's ten years younger and just look at him." Then my old man would light up a cigarette and smile and shake his head and say, "Well, you know how it is. I just play a lot." And then a minute later he'd look around at everybody lying on the lawn there in the sun and pick out me or one of the other younger fellows and say, "Feel like a set of singles?"

If you know north Jersey at all, chances are you know my father. He's Hugh Minot—the Montclair one, not the fellow out in New Brunswick. Just about the biggest realty man in the whole section, I guess. He and my mother have this place in Montclair, thirty-five acres, with a swimming pool and a big vegetable garden and this En-Tout-Cas court. A lovely home. My father got a little name for himself playing football at Rutgers, and that helped him when he went into business, I guess. He never played tennis in college, but after getting out he wanted something to sort of fill in for the football—something he could do well, or do better than the next man. You know how people are. So he took the game up. Of course, I was too little to remember his tennis game when he was still young, but friends of his have told me that it was really hot. He picked the game up like nothing at all, and a couple of pros told him if he'd only started earlier he might have gotten up there in the big time—maybe even with a national ranking, like No. 18 or so. Anyhow, he kept playing and I guess in the last twenty years there hasn't been a season where he missed more than a couple of weekends of tennis in the summertime. A few years back, he even joined one of these fancy clubs in New York with indoor courts, and he'd take a couple of days off from work and go in there just so that he could play in the wintertime. Once, I remember, he played doubles in there with Alice Marble and I think Sidney Wood. He told my mother about that game lots of times, but it didn't mean much to her. She used to play tennis years

ago, just for fun, but she wasn't too good and gave it up. Now the garden is the big thing with her, and she hardly ever comes out to their court, even to watch.

I play a game of tennis just like my father's. Oh, not as good. Not nearly as good, because I haven't had the experience. But it's the same game, really. I've had people tell me that when they saw us playing together—that we both made the same shot the same way. Maybe my backhand was a little better (when it was on), and I used to think that my old man didn't get down low enough on a soft return to his forehand. But mostly we played the same game. Which isn't surprising, seeing that he taught me the game. He started way back when I was about nine or ten. He used to spend whole mornings with me, teaching me a single shot. I guess it was good for me and he did teach me a good, all-round game, but even now I can remember that those morning lessons would somehow discourage both of us. I couldn't seem to learn fast enough to suit him, and he'd get upset and shout across at me, "Straight arm! Straight arm!" and then I'd get jumpy and do the shot even worse. We'd both be glad when the lesson ended.

I don't mean to say that he was so *much* better than I was. We got so we played pretty close a lot of the time. I can still remember the day I first beat him at singles. It was in June of 1937. I'd been playing quite a lot at school and this was my first weekend home after school ended. We went out in the morning, no one else there, and, as usual, he walked right through me the first set—about 6-1 or so. I played much worse than my regular game then, just like I always did against him for some reason. But the next set I aced him in the second game and that set me up and I went on and took him, 7-5. It was a wonderful set of tennis and I was right on top of the world when it ended. I remember running all the way back to the house to tell Mother about it. The old man came in and sort of smiled at her and said something like "Well, I guess I'm old now, Amy."

But don't get the idea I started beating him then. That was the whole trouble. There I was, fifteen, sixteen years old and getting my size, and I began to think, Well, it's about time you took him. He wasn't a young man any more. But he went right on beating me. Somehow I never played well against him and I knew it, and I'd start pressing and getting sore and of course my game would go blooey.

I remember one weekend when I was in college, a whole bunch of us drove down to Montclair in May, for a weekend—my two room-

mates and three girls we knew. It was going to be a lot of fun. But then we went out for some tennis and of course my father was there. We all played some mixed doubles, just fooling around, and then he asked me if I wanted some singles. In that casual way of his. And of course it was 6-2, 6-3, or some such thing. The second set we were really hitting out against each other and the kids watching got real quiet, just as if it was Forest Hills. And then when we came off, Alice, my date, said something to me. About him, I mean. "I think your father is a remarkable man," she said. "Simply remarkable. Don't you think so?" Maybe she wanted to make me feel better about losing, but it was a dumb question. What could I say except yes?

It was while I was in college that I began to play golf a little. I liked the game and I even bought clubs and took a couple of lessons. I broke ninety one day and wrote home to my father about it. He'd never played golf and he wrote back with some little gag about its being an old man's game. Just kidding, you know, and I guess I should have expected it, but I was embarrassed to talk about golf at home after that. I wasn't really very good at it, anyway.

I played some squash in college, too, and even made the B team, but I didn't try out for the tennis team. That disappointed my father, I think, because I wasn't any good at football, and I think he wanted to see me make some team. So he could come and see me play and tell his friends about it, I guess. Still, we did play squash a few times and I could beat him, though I saw that with time he probably would have caught up with me.

I don't want you to get the idea from this that I didn't have a good time playing tennis with him. I can remember the good days very well—lots of days where we'd played some doubles with friends or even a set of singles where my game was holding up or maybe even where I'd taken one set. Afterward we'd walk back together through the orchard, with my father knocking the green apples off the path with his racket the way he always did and the two of us hot and sweaty while we smoked cigarettes and talked about lots of things. Then we'd sit on the veranda and drink a can of beer before taking a dip in the pool. We'd be very close then, I felt.

And I keep remembering a funny thing that happened years ago—oh, away back when I was thirteen or fourteen. We'd gone away, the three of us, for a month in New Hampshire in the summer. We played a lot of tennis that month and my game was coming along pretty fast, but of course my father would beat me every single time

we played. Then he and I both entered the little town championship there the last week in August. Of course, I was put out in the first round (I was only a kid), but my old man went on into the finals. There was quite a big crowd that came to watch that day, and they had a referee and everything. My father was playing a young fellow—about twenty or twenty-one, I guess he was. I remember that I sat by myself, right down beside the court, to watch, and while they were warming up I looked at this man playing my father and whispered to myself, but almost out loud, "Take him! Take him!" I don't know why, but I just wanted him to beat my father in those finals, and it sort of scared me when I found that out. I wanted him to give him a real shellacking. Then they began to play and it was a very close match for a few games. But this young fellow was good, really good. He played a very controlled game, waiting for errors and only hitting out for winners when it was a sure thing. And he went on and won the first set, and in the next my father began to hit into the net and it was pretty plain that it wasn't even going to be close in the second set. I kept watching and pretty soon I felt very funny sitting there. Then the man won a love game off my father and I began to shake. I jumped up and ran all the way up the road to our cabin and into my room and lay down on my bed and cried hard. I kept thinking how I'd wanted to have the man win, and I knew it was about the first time I'd ever seen my father lose a love game. I never felt so ashamed. Of course, that was years and years ago.

I don't think any of this would have bothered me except for one thing—I've always *liked* my father. Except for this game, we've always gotten along fine. He's never wanted a junior-partner son, either in his office or at home. No Judge Hardy stuff or "Let me light your cigar, sir." And no backslapping, either. There have been times where I didn't see much of him for a year or so, but when we got together (at a ball game, say, or during a long trip in a car), we've always found we could talk and argue and have a lot of laughs, too. When I came back on my last furlough before I went overseas during the war, I found that he'd chartered a sloop. The two of us went off for a week's cruise along the Maine coast, and it was swell. Early-morning swims and trying to cook over charcoal and the wonderful quiet that comes over those little coves after you've anchored for the night and the wind has dropped and perhaps you're getting ready to shake up some cocktails. One night there, when we were sitting on deck and smoking cigarettes in the dark, he told me something that he never even



told my mother—that he'd tried to get into the Army and had been turned down. He just said it and we let it drop, but I've always been glad he told me. Somehow it made me feel better about going overseas.

Naturally, during the war I didn't play any tennis at all. And when I came back I got married and all, and I was older, so of course the game didn't mean as much to me. But still, the first weekend we played at my father's—the very first time I'd played him in four years—it was the same as ever. And I'd have sworn I had outgrown the damn thing. But Janet, my wife, had never seen me play the old man before and *she* spotted something. She came up to our room when I was changing afterward. "What's the matter with you?" she asked me. "Why does it mean so much to you? It's just a game, isn't it? I can see that it's a big thing for your father. That's why he plays so much and that's why he's so good at it. But why you?" She was half kidding, but I could see that it upset her. "This isn't a contest," she said. "We're not voting for Best Athlete in the County, are we?" I took her up on that and tried to explain the thing a little, but she wouldn't try to understand. "I just don't like a sorehead," she told me as she went out of the room.

I guess that brings me down to last summer and what happened. It was late in September, one of those wonderful weekends where it begins to get a little cool and the air is so bright. Father had played maybe six or seven sets of doubles Saturday, and then Sunday I came out with Janet, and he had his regular tennis gang there—Eddie Farnshaw and Mark O'Connor and that Mr. Lacy. I guess we men had played three sets of doubles, changing around, and we were sitting there catching our breath. I was waiting for Father to ask me for our singles. But he'd told me earlier that he hadn't been able to get much sleep the night before, so I'd decided that he was too tired for singles. Of course, I didn't even mention that out loud in front of the others—it would have embarrassed him. Then I looked around and noticed that my father was sitting in one of those canvas chairs instead of standing up, the way he usually did between sets. He looked awfully pale, even under his tan, and while I was looking at him he suddenly leaned over and grabbed his stomach and was sick on the grass. We all knew it was pretty bad, and we laid him down and put his cap over his eyes, and I ran back to the house to tell Mother and phone up the doctor. Father didn't say a word when we carried him into the house in the chair, and then Dr. Stockton came and said it

was a heart attack and that Father had played his last game of tennis.

You would have thought after that and after all those months in bed that my father would just give up his tennis court—have it plowed over or let it go to grass. But Janet and I went out there for the weekend just last month and I was surprised to find that the court was in good shape, and Father said that he had asked the gang to come over, just so I could have some good men's doubles. He'd even had a chair set up in the orchard, halfway out to the court, so he could walk out there by himself. He walked out slow, the way he has to, and then sat down in the chair and rested for a couple of minutes, and then made it the rest of the way.

I haven't been playing much tennis this year, but I was really on my game there that day at my father's. I don't think I've ever played better on that court. I hardly made an error and I was relaxed and I felt good about my game. The others even spoke about how well I played.

But somehow it wasn't much fun. It just didn't seem like a real contest to me, and I didn't really care that I was holding my serve right along and winning my sets no matter who my partner was. Maybe for the first time in my life, I guess, I found out that it was only a game we were playing—only that and no more. And I began to realize what my old man and I had done to that game. All that time, all those years, I had only been trying to grow up and he had been trying to keep young, and we'd both done it on the tennis court. And now our struggle was over. I found that out that day, and when I did I suddenly wanted to tell my father about it. But then I looked over at him, sitting in a chair with a straw hat on his head, and I decided not to. I noticed that he didn't seem to be watching us at all. I had the feeling, instead, that he was *listening* to us play tennis and perhaps imagining a game to himself or remembering how he would play the point—the big, high-bouncing serve and the rush to the net for the volley, and then going back for the lob and looking up at it and the wonderful feeling as you uncoil on the smash and put the ball away.

# THROUGH THE TUNNEL

by DORIS LESSING

*Generally speaking, and unlike all Gaul, the world of sport is divided into two parts. First, there are the games in which one keeps score or takes measurements of performance. Then there are the sensation sports where the joy is in the feel of the surf, the skimming over snow on skis, the canter across the fields on a favourite horse. For most of us, swimming belongs in the second category, so Doris Lessing's story of a boy's water adventure along a foreign coast is a more universal and recognizable aspect of swimming than a story of competition would be. There is an extra dimension in this one, however, which does relate it to the competitive aspect of sport. This is a story in which a sporting test is used by a young boy to prove something to himself, something whose value he alone is aware of and comprehends.*

GOING TO THE SHORE on the first morning of the holiday, the young English boy stopped at a turning of the path and looked down at a wild and rocky bay, and then over to the crowded beach he knew so well from other years. His mother walked on in front of him, carrying a bright striped bag in one hand. Her other arm, swinging loose, was very white in the sun. The boy watched that white, naked arm, and turned his eyes, which had a frown behind them, toward the bay and back again to his mother. When she felt he was not with her, she swung around. "Oh, there you are, Jerry!" she said. She looked impatient, then smiled. "Why, darling, would you rather not come with me? Would you rather—" She frowned, conscientiously worrying over what amusements he might secretly be longing for which she had been too busy or too careless to imagine. He was very familiar with that anxious, apologetic smile. Contrition sent him running after her. And yet, as he ran, he looked back over his shoulder at the wild bay, and all morning, as he played on the safe beach, he was thinking of it.

Next morning, when it was time for the routine of swimming and sunbathing, his mother said, "Are you tired of the usual beach, Jerry? Would you like to go somewhere else?"

"Oh, no!" he said quickly, smiling at her out of that unfailing impulse of contrition—a sort of chivalry. Yet, walking down the path with her, he blurted out, "I'd like to go and have a look at those rocks down there."

She gave the idea her attention. It was a wild-looking place, and there was no one there, but she said, "Of course, Jerry. When you've had enough, come to the big beach, or just go straight back to the villa, if you like." She walked away, that bare arm, now slightly reddened from yesterday's sun, swinging. And he almost ran after her again, feeling it unbearable that she should go by herself, but he did not.

She was thinking. Of course he's old enough to be safe without me. Have I been keeping him too close? He mustn't feel he ought to be with me. I must be careful.

He was an only child, eleven years old. She was a widow. She was determined to be neither possessive nor lacking in devotion. She went worrying off to her beach.

As for Jerry, once he saw that his mother had gained her beach, he began the steep descent to the bay. From where he was, high up among red-brown rocks, it was a scoop of moving bluish green fringed with white. As he went lower, he saw that it spread among small promontories and inlets of rough, sharp rock, and the crisping, lapping surface showed stains of purple and darker blue. Finally, as he ran sliding and scraping down the last few yards, he saw an edge of white surf, and the shallow, luminous movement of water over white sand, and, beyond that, a solid, heavy blue.

He ran straight into the water and began swimming. He was a good swimmer. He went out fast over the gleaming sand, over a middle region where rocks lay like discoloured monsters under the surface, and then he was in the real sea—a warm sea where irregular cold currents from the deep water shocked his limbs.

When he was so far out that he could look back not only on the little bay but past the promontory that was between it and the big beach, he floated on the buoyant surface and looked for his mother. There she was, a speck of yellow under an umbrella that looked like a slice of orange peel. He swam back to shore, relieved at being sure she was there, but all at once very lonely.

On the edge of a small cape that marked the side of the bay away from the promontory was a loose scatter of rocks. Above them, some boys were stripping off their clothes. They came running, naked, down

to the rocks. The English boy swam towards them, and kept his distance at a stone's throw. They were of that coast, all of them burned smooth, dark brown, and speaking a language he did not understand. To be with them, of them, was a craving that filled his whole body. He swam a little closer; they turned and watched him with narrowed, alert dark eyes. Then one smiled and waved. It was enough. In a minute, he had swum in and was on the rocks beside them, smiling with a desperate, nervous supplication. They shouted cheerful greetings at him, and then, as he preserved his nervous, uncomprehending smile, they understood that he was a foreigner strayed from his own beach, and they proceeded to forget him. But he was happy. He was with them.

They began diving again and again from a high point into a well of blue sea between rough, pointed rocks. After they had dived and come up, they swam around, hauled themselves up, and waited their turn to dive again. They were big boys—men to Jerry. He dived, and they watched him, and when he swam around to take his place, they made way for him. He felt he was accepted, and he dived again, carefully, proud of himself.

Soon the biggest of the boys poised himself, shot down into the water, and did not come up. The others stood about, watching. Jerry, after waiting for the sleek brown head to appear, let out a yell of warning; they looked at him idly and turned their eyes back towards the water. After a long time, the boy came up on the other side of a big dark rock, letting the air out of his lungs in a sputtering gasp and a shout of triumph. Immediately, the rest of them dived in. One moment, the morning seemed full of chattering boys; the next, the air and the surface of the water were empty. But through the heavy blue, dark shapes could be seen moving and groping.

Jerry dived, shot past the school of underwater swimmers, saw a black wall of rock looming at him, touched it, and bobbed up at once to the surface, where the wall was a low barrier he could see across. There was no one visible; under him, in the water, the dim shapes of the swimmers had disappeared. Then one and then another of the boys came up on the far side of the barrier of rock, and he understood that they had swum through some gap or hole in it. He plunged down again. He could see nothing through the stinging salt water but the blank rock. When he came up, the boys were all on the diving rock, preparing to attempt the feat again. And now, in a panic of failure, he yelled up, in English, "Look at me! Look!" and he began splashing and kicking in the water like a foolish dog.

They looked down gravely, frowning. He knew the frown. At moments of failure, when he clowned to claim his mother's attention, it

was with just this grave, embarrassed inspection that she rewarded him. Through his hot shame, feeling the pleading grin on his face like a scar that he could never remove, he looked up at the group of big brown boys on the rock and shouted, "*Bonjour! Merci! Au revoir! Monsieur, monsieur!*" while he hooked his fingers round his ears and waggled them.

Water surged into his mouth; he choked, sank, came up. The rock, lately weighted with boys, seemed to rear up out of the water as their weight was removed. They were flying down past him, now, into the water; the air was full of falling bodies. Then the rock was empty in the hot sunlight. He counted one, two, three. . . .

At fifty, he was terrified. They must all be drowning beneath him, in the watery caves of the rock! At a hundred, he stared around him at the empty hillside, wondering if he should yell for help. He counted faster, faster, to hurry them up, to bring them to the surface quickly, to drown them quickly—anything rather than the terror of counting on and on into the blue emptiness of the morning. And then, at a hundred and sixty, the water beyond the rock was full of boys blowing like brown whales. They swam back to the shore without a look at him.

He climbed back to the diving rock and sat down, feeling the hot roughness of it under his thighs. The boys were gathering up their bits of clothing and running off along the shore to another promontory. They were leaving to get away from him. He cried openly, fists in his eyes. There was no one to see him, and he cried himself out.

It seemed to him that a long time had passed, and he swam out to where he could see his mother. Yes, she was still there, a yellow spot under an orange umbrella. He swam back to the big rock, climbed up, and dived into the blue pool among the fanged and angry boulders. Down he went, until he touched the wall of rock again. But the salt was so painful in his eyes that he could not see.

He came to the surface, swam to shore and went back to the villa to wait for his mother. Soon she walked slowly up the path, swinging her striped bag, the flushed, naked arm dangling beside her. "I want some swimming goggles," he panted, defiant and beseeching.

She gave him a patient, inquisitive look as she said casually, "Well, of course, darling."

But now, now, now! He must have them this minute, and no other time. He nagged and pestered until she went with him to a shop. As soon as she had bought the goggles, he grabbed them from her hand as if she were going to claim them for herself, and was off, running down the steep path to the bay.

Jerry swam out to the big barrier rock, adjusted the goggles, and dived. The impact of the water broke the rubber-enclosed vacuum, and

the goggles came loose. He understood that he must swim down to the base of the rock from the surface of the water. He fixed the goggles tight and firm, filled his lungs, and floated, face down, on the water. Now he could see. It was as if he had eyes of a different kind—fish-eyes that showed everything clear and delicate and wavering in the bright water.

Under him, six or seven feet down, was a floor of perfectly clean, shining white sand, rippled firm and hard by the tides. Two greyish shapes steered there, like long, rounded pieces of wood or slate. They were fish. He saw them nose towards each other, poise motionless, make a dart forward, swerve off, and come around again. It was like a water dance. A few inches above them, the water sparkled as if sequins were dropping through it. Fish again—myriads of minute fish, the length of his fingernail, were drifting through the water, and in a moment he could feel the innumerable tiny touches of them against his limbs. It was like swimming in flaked silver. The great rock the big boys had swum through rose sheer out of the white sand, black, tufted lightly with greenish weed. He could see no gap in it. He swam down to its base.

Again and again he rose, took a big chestful of air, and went down. Again and again he groped over the surface of the rock, feeling it, almost hugging it in the desperate need to find the entrance. And then once, while he was clinging to the black wall, his knees came up and he shot his feet out forward and they met no obstacle. He had found the hole.

He gained the surface, clambered about the stones that littered the barrier rock until he found a big one, and with this in his arms let himself down over the side of the rock. He dropped, with the weight, straight to the sandy floor. Clinging tight to the anchor of stone, he lay on his side and looked in under the dark shelf at the place where his feet had gone. He could see the hole. It was an irregular, dark gap, but he could not see deep into it. He let go of his anchor, clung with his hands to the edges of the hole, and tried to push himself in.

He got his head in, found his shoulders jammed, moved them in side-wise, and was inside as far as his waist. He could see nothing ahead. Something soft and clammy touched his mouth, he saw a dark frond moving against the greyish rock, and panic filled him. He thought of octopuses, of clinging weed. He pushed himself out backward and caught a glimpse, as he retreated, of a harmless tentacle of seaweed drifting in the mouth of the tunnel. But it was enough. He reached the sunlight, swam to shore, and lay on the diving rock. He looked down into the blue well of water. He knew he must find his way through that cave, or hole, or tunnel, and out the other side.

First, he thought, he must learn to control his breathing. He let himself down into the water with another big stone in his arms, so that he could lie effortlessly on the bottom of the sea. He counted. One, two, three. He counted steadily. He could hear the movement of blood in his chest. Fifty-one, fifty-two. . . . His chest was hurting. He let go of the rock and went up into the air. He saw that the sun was low. He rushed to the villa and found his mother at her supper. She said only "Did you enjoy yourself?" and he said "Yes."

All night, the boy dreamed of the water-filled cave in the rock, and as soon as breakfast was over he went to the bay.

That night, his nose bled badly. For hours he had been underwater, learning to hold his breath, and now he felt weak and dizzy. His mother said, "I shouldn't overdo things, darling, if I were you."

That day and the next, Jerry exercised his lungs as if everything, the whole of his life, all that he would become, depended upon it. And again his nose bled at night, and his mother insisted on his coming with her the next day. It was a torment to him to waste a day of his careful self-training, but he stayed with her on that other beach, which now seemed a place for small children, a place where his mother might lie safe in the sun. It was not his beach.

He did not ask for permission, on the following day, to go to his beach. He went, before his mother could consider the complicated rights and wrongs of the matter. A day's rest, he discovered, had improved his count by ten. The big boys had made the passage while he counted a hundred and sixty. He had been counting fast, in his fright. Probably now, if he tried, he could get through that long tunnel, but he was not going to try yet. A curious, most unchildlike persistence, a controlled impatience, made him wait. In the meantime, he lay underwater on the white sand, littered now by stones he had brought down from the upper air, and studied the entrance to the tunnel. He knew every jut and corner of it, as far as it was possible to see. It was as if he already felt its sharpness about his shoulders.

He sat by the clock in the villa, when his mother was not near, and checked his time. He was incredulous and then proud to find he could hold his breath without strain for two minutes. The words "two minutes," authorized by the clock, brought the adventure that was so necessary to him close.

In another four days, his mother said casually one morning, they must go home. On the day before they left, he would do it. He would do it if it killed him, he said defiantly to himself. But two days before they were to leave—a day of triumph when he increased his count by fifteen—his nose bled so badly that he turned dizzy and had to lie limply



over the big rock like a bit of seaweed, watching the thick red blood flow on to the rock and trickle slowly down to the sea. He was frightened. Supposing he turned dizzy in the tunnel? Supposing he died there, trapped? Supposing—his head went around, in the hot sun, and he almost gave up. He thought he would return to the house and lie down, and next summer, perhaps, when he had another year's growth in him—*then* he would go through the hole.

But even after he had made the decision, or thought he had, he found himself sitting up on the rock and looking down into the water, and he knew that now, this moment, when his nose had only just stopped bleeding, when his head was still sore and throbbing, this was the moment when he would try. If he did not do it now, he never would. He was trembling with fear that he would not go, and he was trembling with horror at that long, long tunnel under the rock, under the sea. Even in the open sunlight, the barrier rock seemed very wide and very heavy, tons of rock pressed down on where he would go. If he died there, he would lie until one day—perhaps not before next year—those big boys would swim into it and find it blocked.

He put on his goggles, litted them tight, tested the vacuum. His hands were shaking. Then he chose the biggest stone he could carry and slipped over the edge of the rock until half of him was in the cool, enclosing water and half in the hot sun. He looked up once at the empty sky, filled his lungs once, twice, and then sank fast to the bottom with the stone. He let it go and began to court. He took the edges of the hole in his hands and drew himself into it, wriggling his shoulders in sidewise as he remembered he must, kicking himself along with his feet.

Soon he was clear inside. He was in a small, rock-bound hole filled with yellowish-grey water. The water was pushing him up against the roof. The roof was sharp and pained his back. He pulled himself along with his hands—fast, fast—and used his legs as levers. His head knocked against something, a sharp pain dizzied him. Fifty, fifty-one, fifty-two. He was without light, and the water seemed to press upon him with the weight of rock. Seventy-one, seventy-two. There was no strain on his lungs. He felt like an inflated balloon, his lungs were so light and easy, but his head was pulsing.

He was being continually pressed against the sharp roof, which felt slimy as well as sharp. Again he thought of octopuses, and wondered if the tunnel might be filled with weed that could tangle him. He gave himself a panicky, convulsive kick forward, ducked his head, and swam. His feet and hands moved freely, as if in open water. The hole must have widened out. He thought he must be swimming fast, and he was frightened of banging his head if the tunnel narrowed.

A hundred, a hundred and one. . . . The water paled. Victory filled him. His lungs were beginning to hurt. A few more strokes and he would be out. He was counting wildly; he said a hundred and fifteen, and then, a long time later, a hundred and fifteen again. The water was a clear jewel-green all around him. Then he saw, above his head, a crack running up through the rock. Sunlight was falling through it, showing the clean dark rock of the tunnel, a single mussel shell and darkness ahead.

He was at the end of what he could do. He looked up at the crack as if it were filled with air and not water, as if he could put his mouth to it to draw in air. A hundred and fifteen, he heard himself say inside his head-- but he had said that long ago. He must go on into the blackness ahead, or he would drown. His head was swelling, his lungs cracking. A hundred and fifteen, a hundred and fifteen pounded through his head, and he feebly clutched at rocks in the dark, pulling himself forward, leaving the brief space of sunlit water behind. He felt he was dying. He was no longer quite conscious. He struggled on in the darkness between lapses into unconsciousness. An immense, swelling pain filled his head, and then the darkness cracked with an explosion of green light. His hands, groping forward, met nothing, and his feet, kicking back, propelled him out into the open sea.

He drifted to the surface, his face turned up to the air. He was gasping like a fish. He felt he would sink now and drown; he could not swim the few feet back to the rock. Then he was clutching it and pulling himself up on to it. He lay face down, gasping. He could see nothing but a red-veined, clotted dark. His eyes must have burst, he thought; they were full of blood. He tore off his goggles and a gout of blood went into the sea. His nose was bleeding, and the blood had filled the goggles.

He scooped up handfuls of water from the cool, salty sea, to splash on his face, and did not know whether it was blood or salt water he tasted. After a time, his heart quieted, his eyes cleared, and he sat up. He could see the local boys diving and playing half a mile away. He did not want them. He wanted nothing but to get back home and lie down.

In a short while, Jerry swam to shore and climbed slowly up the path to the villa. He flung himself on his bed and slept, waking at the sound of feet on the path outside. His mother was coming back. He rushed to the bathroom, thinking she must not see his face with bloodstains, or tearstains, on it. He came out of the bathroom and met her as she walked into the villa, smiling, her eyes lighting up.

"Have a nice morning?" she asked, laying her hand on his warm brown shoulder a moment.

"Oh, yes, thank you," he said.

"You look a bit pale." And then, sharp and anxious, "How did you bang your head?"

"Oh, just banged it," he told her.

She looked at him closely. He was strained. His eyes were glazed-looking. She was worried. And then she said to herself, "Oh, don't fuss! Nothing can happen. He can swim like a fish."

They sat down to lunch together.

"Mummy," he said, "I can stay under water for two minutes—three minutes, at least." It came bursting out of him.

"Can you, darling?" she said. "Well, I shouldn't overdo it. I don't think you ought to swim any more today."

She was ready for a battle of wills, but he gave in at once. It was no longer of the least importance to go to the bay.

# YOU COULD LOOK IT UP

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by JAMES THURBER

*James Thurber, who often dips into the world of fantasy in his stories and books, was doing so when he wrote this wild baseball yarn in 1941. Ten years passed, and on August 19, Mr. Thurber suddenly appeared to be clairvoyant, for the St. Louis Browns actually bobbed up with a midget in their line-up, to bat against the Detroit Tigers! It turned out to be more farce than fantasy. In any case, if you haven't been introduced before, meet all thirty-five irches of one of the most amusing characters in sports fiction, Pearl du Monville.*

IT ALL BEGUN when we dropped down to C'lumbus, Ohio, from Pittsburgh to play a exhibition game on our way out to St. Louis. It was gettin' on into September, and though we'd been leadin' the league by six, seven games most of the season, we was now in first place by a margin you could 'a' got it into the eye of a thimble, bein' only a half a game ahead of St. Louis. Our slump had given the boys the leapin' jumps, and they was like a bunch a old ladies at a lawn fete with a thunderstorm comin' up, runnin' around snarlin' at each other, eatin' bad and sleepin' worse, and battin' for a team average of maybe .186. Half the time 'nobody'd speak to nobody else, without it was to bawl 'em out.

Squawks Magrew was managin' the boys at the time, and he was darn near crazy. They called him "Squawks" 'cause when things was

goin' bad he lost his voice, or perty near lost it, and squealed at you like a little girl you stepped on her doll or somethin'. He yelled at everybody and wouldn't listen to nobody, without maybe it was me. I'd been trainin' the boys for ten year, and he'd take more lip from me than from anybody else. He knowed I was smarter'n him, anyways, like you're goin' to hear.

This was thirty, thirty-one year ago; you could look it up, 'cause it was the same year C'lumbus decided to call itself the Arch City, on account of a lot of iron arches with electric-light bulbs into 'em which stretched acrost High Street. Thomas Albert Edison sent 'em a telegram, and they was speeches and maybe even President Taft opened the celebration by pushin' a button. It was a great week for the Buckeye capital, which was why they got us out there for this exhibition game.

Well, we just lose a double-header to Pittsburgh, 11 to 5 and 7 to 3, so we snarled all the way to C'lumbus, where we put up at the Chittaden Hotel, still snarlin'. Everybody was tetchy, and when Billy Klinger took a sock at Whitey Cott at breakfast, Whitey throwed marmalade all over his face.

"Blind each other, whatta I care?" says Magrew. "You can't see nothin' anyways."

C'lumbus win the exhibition game, 3 to 2, whilst Magrew set in the dugout, mutterin' and cursin' like a fourteen-year-old Scotty. He bad-mouthed everybody on the ball club and he bad-mouthed everybody offa the ball club, includin' the Wright brothers, who, he claimed, had yet to build a airship big enough for any of our boys to hit it with a ball bat.

"I wisht I was dead," he says to me. "I wisht I was in heaven with the angels."

I told him to pull hisself together, 'cause he was drivin' the boys crazy, the way he was goin' on, sulkin' and bad-mouthin' and whinin'. I was older'n he was and smarter'n he was, and he knowed it I was ten times smarter'n he was about this Pearl du Monville, first time I ever laid eyes on the little guy, which was one of the saddest days of my life.

Now, most peopie name of Pearl is girls, but this Pearl du Monville was a man, if you could call a fella a man who was only thirty-four, thirty-five inches high. Pearl du Monville was a midget. He was part French and part Hungarian, and maybe even part Bulgarian or somethin'. I can see him now, a sneer on his little pushed-in pan,

swingin' a bamboo cane and smokin' a big cigar. He had a gray suit with a big black check into it, and he had a gray felt hat with one of them rainbow-colored hatbands onto it, like the young fellas wore in them days. He talked like he was talkin' into a tin can, but he didn't have no foreign accent. He might 'a' been fifteen or he might 'a' been a hundred, you couldn't tell. Pearl du Monville.

After the game with C'lumbus, Magrew headed straight for the Chittaden bar—the train for St. Louis wasn't goin' for three, four hours—and there he set, drinkin' rye and talkin' to this bartender.

"How I pity me, brother," Magrew was tellin' this bartender. "How I pity me." That was alwuz his favorite tune. So he was settin' there, tellin' this bartender how heartbreakin' it was to be manager of a bunch of blindfolded circus clowns, when up pops this Pearl du Monville outa nowheres.

It give Magrew the leapin' jumps. He thought at first maybe the D.T.s had come back on him; he claimed he'd had 'em once, and little guys had popped up all around him, wearin' red, white and blue hats.

"Go on, now!" Magrew yells. "Get away from me!"

But the midget clumb up on a chair acrost the table from Magrew and says, "I seen that game today, Junior, and you ain't got no ball club. What you got there, Junior," he says, "is a side show."

"Whatta ya mean, 'Junior'?" says Magrew, touchin' the little guy to satisfy hisself he was real.

"Don't pay him no attention, mister," says the bartender. "Pearl calls everybody 'Junior,' 'cause it alwuz turns out he's a year older'n anybody else."

"Yeh?" says Magrew. "How old is he?"

"How old are you, Junior?" says the midget.

"Who, me? I'm fifty-three," says Magrew.

"Well, I'm fifty-four," says the midget.

Magrew grins and asts him what he'll have, and that was the be-ginnin' of their beautiful friendship, if you don't care what you say.

Pearl du Monville stood up on his chair and waved his cane around and pretended like he was ballyhooin' for a circus. "Right this way, folks!" he yells. "Come on in and see the greatest collection of freaks in the world! See the armless pitchers, see the eyeless batters, see the infielders with five thumbs!" and on and on like that, feedin' Magrew gall and handin' him a laugh at the same time, you might say.

You could hear him and Pearl du Monville hootin' and hollerin' and singin' way up to the fourth floor of the Chittaden, where the boys was packin' up. When it come time to go to the station, you can imagine how disgusted we was when we crowded into the doorway of that bar and seen them two singin' and goin' on.

"Well, well, well," says Magrew, lookin' up and spottin' us. "Look who's here. . . . Clowns, this is Pearl du Monville, a monseer of the old, old school. . . . Don't shake hands with 'em, Pearl, 'cause their fingers is made of chalk and would bust right off in your paws," he says, and he starts guffawin' and Pearl starts titterin' and we stand there givin' 'em the iron eye, it bein' the lowest ebb a ball-club manager'd got hisself down to since the national pastime was started

Then the midget begun givin' us the ballyhoo. "Come on in!" he says, wavin' his cane. "See the legless base runners, see the outfielders with the butter fingers, see the southpaw with the arm of a little chee-ild!"

Then him and Magrew begun to hoop and holler and nudge each other till you'd of thought this little guy was the funniest guy than even Charlie Chaplin. The fellas filed outa the bar without a word and went on up to the Union Depot, leavin' me to handle Magrew and his new-found crony

Well, I got 'em outa there finely I had to take the little guy along, 'cause Magrew had a holt onto him like a vise and I couldn't pry him loose.

"He's comin' along as masket," says Magrew, holdin' the midget in the crouch of his arm like a football. And come along he did, hollerin' and protestin' and beatin' at Magrew with his little fists.

"Cut it out, will ya, Junior?" the little guy kept whinin'. "Come on, leave a man loose, will ya, Junior?"

But Junior kept a holt onto him and begun yellin', "See the guys with the glass arm, see the guys with the cast-iron brains, see the fielders with the feet on their wrists!"

So it goes, right through the whole Union Depot, with people starin' and catcallin', and he don't put the midget down till he gets him through the gates.

"How'm I goin' to go along without no toothbrush?" the midget asks. "What'm I goin' to do without no other suit?" he says.

"Doc here," says Magrew, meanin' me—"doc here will look after you like you was his own son, won't you, doc?"

I give him the iron eye, and he finely got on the train and prob'ly went to sleep with his clothes on.

This left me alone with the midget. "Lookit," I says to him. "Why don't you go on home now? Come mornin', Magrew'll forget all about you. He'll prob'ly think you was somethin' he seen in a nightmare maybe. And he ain't goin' to laugh so easy in the mornin', neither," I says. "So why don't you go on home?"

"Nix," he says to me. "Skiddoo," he says, "twenty-three for you," and he tosses his cane up into the vestibule of the coach and clam'ers on up after it like a cat. So that's the way Pearl du Monville come to go to St. Louis with the ball club.

I seen 'em first at breakfast the next day, settin' opposite each other; the midget playin' "Turkey in the Straw" on a harmonium and Magrew starin' at his eggs and bacon like they was a uncooked bird with its feather, still on.

"Remember where you found this?" I says, jerkin' my thumb at the midget. "Or maybe you think they come with breakfast on these trains," I says, bein' a good hand at turnin' a sharp remark in them days.

The midget puts down the harmonium and turns on me. "Sneeze," he says; "your brains is dusty." Then he snaps a couple drops of water at me from a tumbler. "Drown," he says, tryin' to make his voice deep.

Now, both them cracks is Civil War cracks, but you'd of thought they was brand-new and the funniest than any crack Magrew'd ever heard in his whole life. He started hoopin' and hollerin', and the midget started hoopin' and hollerin', so I walked on away and set down with Bugs Courtney and Hank Metters, payin' no attention to this weak-minded Damon and Phidias acrost the aisle.

Well, sir, the first game with St. Louis was rained out, and there we was facin' a double-header next day. Like maybe I told you, we lose the last three double-headers we play, makin' maybe twenty-five errors in the six games, which is all right for the intimates of a school for the blind, but is disgraceful for the world's champions. It was too wet to go to the zoo, and Magrew wouldn't let us go to the movies, 'cause they flickered so bad in them days. So we just set around, stewin' and frettin'.

One of the newspaper boys come over to take a pitture of Billy Klinger and Whitey Cott shakin' hands—this reporter'd heard about



the fight—and whilst they was standin' there, toe to toe, shakin' hands, Billy give a back lunge and a jerk, and throwed Whitey over his shoulder into a corner of the room, like a sack a salt. Whitey come back at him with a chair, and Bethlehem broke loose in that there room. The camera was tromped to pieces like a berry basket. When we finely got 'em pulled apart, I heard a laugh, and there was Magrew and the midget standin' in the door and givin' us the iron eye.

"Wrasslers," says Magrew, cold-like, "that's what I got for a ball club, Mr. du Monville, wrasslers—and not very good wrasslers at that, you ast me."

"A man can't be good at everythin'," says Pearl, "but he oughta be good at somethin'."

This sets Magrew guffawin' again, and away they go, the midget taggin' along by his side like a hound dog and handin' him a fast line of so-called comic cracks.

When we went out to face that battlin' St. Louis club in a double-header the next afternoon, the boys was jumpy as tin toys with keys in their back. We lose the first game, 7 to 2, and are trailin', 4 to 0, when the second game ain't but ten minutes old. Magrew set there like a stone statue, peakin' to nobody. Then, in their half a the fourth, somebody singled to center and knocked in two more runs for St. Louis.

That made Magrew squawk. "I wisht one thing," he says. "I wisht I was manager of a old ladies' sewin' circus 'stead of a ball club."

"You are, Junior, you are," says a familyer and disagreeable voice.

It was that Pearl du Monville again, poppin' up outa nowheres, swingin' his bamboo cane and smokin' a cigar that's three sizes too big for his face. By this time we'd finely got the other side out, and Hank Metters slithered a bat acrost the ground, and the midget had to jump to keep both his ankles from bein' broke.

I thought Magrew'd bust a blood vessel. "You hurt Pearl and I'll break your neck!" he yelled

Hank muttered somethin' and went on up to the plate and struck out.

We managed to get a couple runs acrost in our half a the sixth, but they come back with three more in their half a the seventh, and this was too much for Magrew.

"Come on, Pearl," he says. "We're gettin' outa here."

"Where you think you're goin'?" I ast him.

"To the lawyer's again," he says cryptly.

"I didn't know you'd been to the lawyer's once, yet," I says.

"Which that goes to show how much you don't know," he says.

With that, they was gone, and I didn't see 'em the rest of the day, nor know what they was up to, which was a God's blessin'. We lose the nightcap, 9 to 3, and that puts us into second place plenty, and as low in our mind as a ball club can get.

The next day was a horrible day, like anybody that lived through it can tell you. Practice was just over and the St. Louis club was takin' the field, when I hears this strange sound from the stands. It sounds like the nervous whickerin' a horse gives when he smells some-thin' funny on the wind. It was the fans ketchin' sight of Pearl du Monville, like you have prob'ly guessed. The midget had popped up onto the field all dressed up in a minacher club uniform, sock, cap, little letters sewed onto his chest, and all. He was swingin' a kid's bat and the only thing kept him from lookin' like a real ballplayer seen through the wrong end of a microscope was this cigar he was smokin'.

Bugs Courtney reached over and jerked it outa his mouth and throwed it away. "You're wearin' that suit on the playin' field," he says to him, severe as a judge. "You go insultin' it and I'll take you out to the zoo and feed you to the bears."

Pearl just blowed some smoke at him which he still has in his mouth.

Whilst Whitey was foul'n' off four or five prior to strikin' out, I went on over to Magrew. "If I was as comic as you," I says, "I'd laugh myself to death," I says. "Is that any way to treat the uniform, makin' a mockery out of it?"

"It might surprise you to know I ain't makin' no mockery outa the uniform," says Magrew. "Pearl du Monville here has been made a bone-of-fida member of this so-called ball club. I fixed it up with the front office by long-distance phone."

"Yeh?" I says. "I can just hear Mr. Dillworth or Bart Jenkins agreein' to hire a midget for the ball club. I can just hear 'em." Mr. Dillworth was the owner of the club and Bart Jenkins was the secretary, and they never stood for no monkey business. "May I be so bold as to inquire," I says, "just what you told 'em?"

"I told 'em," he says, "I wanted to sign up a guy they ain't no pitcher in the league can strike him out."

"Uh-huh," I says, "and did you tell 'em what size of a man he is?"

"Never mind about that," he says. "I got papers on me, made out legal and proper, constitutin' one Pearl du Monville a bone-of-fida

member of this former ball club. Maybe that'll shame them big babies into gettin' in there and swingin', knowin' I can replace any one of 'em with a midget, if I have a mind to. A St. Louis lawyer I seen twice tells me it's all legal and proper."

"A St. Louis lawyer would," I says, "seein' nothin' could make him happier than havin' you makin' a mockery outa this one-time baseball outfit," I says.

Well, sir, it'll all be there in the papers of thirty, thirty-one year ago, and you could look it up. The game went along without no scorin' for seven innings, and since they ain't nothin' much to watch but guys poppin' up or strikin' out, the fans pay most of their attention to the goin's-on of Pearl du Monville. He's out there in front a the dugout, turnin' handsprings, balancin' his bat on his chin, walkin' a imaginary line, and so on. The fans clapped and laughed at him, and he ate it up.

So it went up to the last a the eighth, nothin' to nothin', not more'n seven, eight hits all told, and no errors on neither side. Our pitcher gets the first two men out easy in the eighth. Then up come a fella name of Porter or Billings, or some such name, and he lammed one up against the tobacco sign for three bases. The next guy up slapped the first ball out into left for a base hit, and in come the fella from third for the only run of the ball game so far. The crowd yelled, the look a death come onto Magrew's face again, and even the midget quit his tomfoolin'. Their next man fouled out back a third, and we come up for our last bats like a bunch a schoolgirls steppin' into a pool of cold water. I was lower in my mind than I'd been since the day in nineteen-four when Chesbro throwed the wild pitch in the ninth inning with a man on third and lost the pennant for the Highlanders. I knowed something just as bad was goin' to happen, which shows I'm a clairvoyun, or was then.

When Gordy Mills hit out to second, I just closed my eyes. I opened 'em up again to see Dutch Muller standin' on second, dustin' off his pants. him havin' got his first hit in maybe twenty times to the plate. Next up was Harry Loesing, battin' for our pitcher, and he got a base on balls, walkin' on a fourth one you could 'a' combed your hair with.

Then up come Whitey Cott, our lead-off man. He crotches down in what was prob'ly the most fearsome stanch in organized ball, but all he can do is pop out to short. That brung up Billy Klinger, with two down and a man on first and second. Billy took a cut at one you

could 'a' knocked a plug hat offa this here Carnera with it, but then he gets sense enough to wait 'em out, and finely he walks, too, fillin' the bases.

Yes, sir, there you are; the tyin' run on third and the winnin' run on second, first a the ninth, two men down, and Hank Metters comin' to the bat. Hank was built like a Pope-Hartford and he couldn't run no faster'n President Taft, but he had five home runs to his credit for the season, and that wasn't bad in them days. Hank was still hittin' better'n anybody else on the ball club. and it was mighty heartenin', seein' him stridin' up toward the plate. But he never got there.

"Wait a minute!" yells Magrew, jumpin' to his feet. "I'm sendin' in a pinch hitter!" he yells.

You could 'a' heard a bomb drop. When a ball-club manager says he's sendin' in a pinch hitter for the best batter on the club, you know and I know and everybody knows he's lost his holt.

"They're goin' to be sendin' the funny wagon for you, if you don't watch out," I says, grabbin' a holt of his arm.

But he pulled away and ran out toward the plate, yellin'. "Du Monville battin' for Metters!"

All the fellas begun squawlin' at once, except Hank, and he just stood there scarin' at Magrew like he'd gone crazy and was claimin' to be Ty Cobb's grandma or somethin'. Their pitcher stood out there with his hands on his hips and a disagreeable look on his face, and the plate umpire told Magrew to go on and get a batter up. Magrew told him again Du Monville was battin' for Metters, and the St. Louis manager finely got the idea. It brung him outa his dugout, howlin' and bawlin' like he'd lost a female dog and her seven pups.

Magrew pushed the midget toward the plate and he says to him, he says, "Just stand up there and hold that bat on your shoulder. They ain't a man in the world can throw three strikes in there 'fore he throws four balls!" he says. •

"I get it, Junior!" says the midget. "He'll walk me and force in the tyin' run!" And he starts on up to the plate as cocky as if he was Willie Keeler.

I don't need to tell you Bethlehem broke loose on that there ball field. The fans got onto their hind legs, yellin' and whistlin', and everybody on the field begun wavin' their arms and hollerin' and shovin'. The plate umpire stalked over to Magrew like a traffic cop, waggin' his jaw and pointin' his finger, and the St. Louis manager kept yellin' like his house was on fire. When Pearl got up to the plate

and stood there, the pitcher slammed his glove down onto the ground and started 'stompin' on it, and they ain't nobody can blame him. He's just walked two normal-sized human bein's, 'and now here's a guy up to the plate they ain't more'n twenty inches between his knees and his shoulders.

The plate umpire called in the field umpire, and they talked a while, like a couple doctors seein' the bucolic plague or somethin' for the first time. Then the plate umpire come over to Magrew with his arms folded across his chest, and he told him to go on and get a batter up, or he'd forfeit the game to St. Louis. He pulled out his watch, but somebody batted it outa his hand in the scufflin', and I thought there'd be a free-for-all, with everybody yellin' and shovin' except Pearl du Monville, who stood up at the plate with his little bat on his shoulder, not movin' a muscle.

Then Magrew played his ace. I seen him pull some papers outa his pocket and show 'em to the plate umpire. The umpire begun lookin' at 'em like they was bills for somethin' he not only never bought it, he never even heard of it. The other umpire studied 'em like they was a death-warren, and all this time the St. Louis manager and the fans and the players is yellin' and hollerin'.

Well, sir, they fought about him bein' a midget, and they fought about him usin' a kid's bat, and they fought about where'd he been all season. They was eight or nine rule books brung out and everybody was thumbin' through 'em, tryin' to find out what it says about midgets, but it don't say nothin' about midgets, 'cause this was somethin' never'd come up in the history of the game before, and nobody'd ever dreamed about it, even when they has nightmares. Maybe you can't send no midgets in to bat nowadays, 'cause the old game's changed a lot, mostly for the worst, but you could then, it turned out.

The plate umpire finely decided the contrack papers was all legal and proper, like Magrew said, so he waved the St. Louis players back to their places and he pointed his finger at their manager and told him to quit-hollerin' and get on back in the dugout. The manager says the game is percedin' under protest, and the umpire bawls, "Play ball!" over 'n' above the yellin' and booin', him havin' a voice like a hog-caller.

The St. Louis pitcher picked up his glove and beat at it with his fist six or eight times, and then got set on the mound and studied the situation. The fans realized he was really goin' to pitch to the midget, and they went crazy, hoopin' and hollerin' louder'n ever, and throwin'

pop bottles and hats and cushions down onto the field. It took five, ten minutes to get the fans quieted down again, whilst our fellas that was on base set down on the bags and waited. And Pearl du Monville kept standin' up there with the bat on his shoulder, like he'd been told to.

So the pitcher starts studyin' the setup again, and you got to admit it was the strangest setup in a ball game since the players cut off their beards and begun wearin' gloves. I wisht I could call the pitcher's name—it wasn't old Barney Peltz nor Nig Jack Powell nor Harry Howell. He was a big right-hander, but I can't call his name. You could look it up. Even in a crotch-in' position, the catcher towers over the midget like the Washington Monument

The plate umpire tries standin' on his tiptoes, then he tries crotch-in' down, and he finely gets himself into a stance nobody'd ever seen on a ball field before, kinda squattin' down on his hanches.

Well, the pitcher is sore as a old buggy horse in fly time. He slams in the first pitch, hard and wild, and maybe two foot higher'n the midget's head.

"Ball one!" hollers the umpire over 'n' above the racket, 'cause everybody is yellin' worsten ever.

The catcher goes on out toward the mound and talks to the pitcher and hands him the ball. This time the big right-hander tries a under-shoot, and it comes in a little closer, maybe no higher'n a foot, foot and a half above Pearl's head. It would 'a' been a strike with a human bein' in there, but the umpire's got to call it, and he does.

"Ball two!" he bellers.

The catcher walks on out to the mound again, and the whole in-field comes over and gives advice to the pitcher about what they'd do in a case like this, with two balls and no strikes on a batter that oughta be in a bottle of alcohol 'stead of up there at the plate in a big-league game between the teams that is fightin' for first place.

For the third pitch, the pitcher stands there flat-footed and tosses up the ball like he's playin' ketch with a little girl.

Pearl stands there motionless as a hitchin' post, and the ball comes in big and slow and high—high for Pearl, that is, it bein' about on a level with his eyes, or a little higher'n a grown man's knees.

They ain't nothin' else for the umpire to do, so he calls, "Ball three!"

Everybody is onto their feet, hoopin' and hollerin', as the pitcher sets to throw ball four. The St. Louis manager is makin' signs and faces

like he was a contorturer, and the infield is givin' the pitcher some more advice about what to do this time. Our boys who was on base stick right onto the bag, runnin' no risk of bein' nipped for the last out.

Well, the pitcher decides to give him a toss again, seein' he come closer with that than with a fast ball. They ain't nobody ever seen a slower ball throwed. It come in big as a balloon and slower'n any ball ever throwed before in the major leagues. It come right in over the plate in front of Pearl's chest, lookin' prob'ly big as a full moon to Pearl. They ain't never been a minute like the minute that followed since the United States was founded by the Pilgrim grandfathers.

Pearl du Monville took a cut at that ball, and he hit it! Magrew give a groan like a poleaxed steer as the ball rolls out in front a the plate into fair territory.

"Fair ball!" yells the umpire, and the midget starts runnin' for first, still carryin' that little bat, and makin' maybe ninety foot an hour. Bethlehem breaks loose on that ball field and in them stands. They ain't never been nothin' like it since creation was begun.

The ball's rollin' slow, on down toward third, goin' maybe eight, ten foot. The infield comes in fast and our boys break from their bases like hares in a brush fire. Everybody is standin' up, yellin' and hollerin', and Magrew is tearin' his hair outa his head, and the midget is scamperin' for first with all the speed of one of them little dash-hounds carryin' a satchel in his mouth.

The catcher gets to the ball first, but he boots it on out past the pitcher's box, the pitcher fallin' on his face tryin' to stop it, the short-stop sprawlin' after it full length and zaggin' it on over toward the second baseman, whilst Muller is scorin' with the tyin' run and Loesing is roundin' third with the winnin' run. Ty Cobb could 'a' made a three-bagger outa that bunt, with everybody fallin' over theirselves tryin' to pick the ball up. But Pearl is still maybe fifteen, twenty feet from the bag, toddlin' like a baby and yeepin' like a trapped rabbit, when the second baseman finely gets a holt of that ball and slams it over to first. The first baseman ketches it and stomps on the bag, the base umpire waves Pearl out, and there goes your old ball game, the craziest ball game ever played in the history of the organized world.

Their players start runnin' in, and then I see Magrew. He starts after Pearl, runnin' faster'n any man ever run before. Pearl sees him comin' and runs behind the base umpire's legs and gets a holt onto 'em. Magrew comes up, pantin' and roarin', and him and the midget

plays ring-around-a-rosy with the umpire, who keeps shovin' at Magrew with one hand and tryin' to slap the midget loose from his legs with the other.

Finely Magrew ketches the midget, who is still yeepin' like a stuck sheep. He gets holt of that little guy by both his ankles and starts whirlin' him round and round his head like Magrew was a hammer thrower and Pearl was the hammer. Nobody can stop him without gettin' their head knocked off, so everybody just stands there and yells. Then Magrew lets the midget fly. He flies on out toward second, high and fast, like a human home run, headed for the soap sign in center field.

Their shortstop tries to get to him, but he can't make it, and I knowed the little fella was goin' to bust to pieces like a dollar watch on a asphalt street when he hit the ground. But it so happens their center fielder is just crossin' second, and he starts runnin' back, tryin' to get under the midget, who had took to spiralin' like a football 'stead of turnin' head over foot, which give him more speed and more distance.

I know you never seen a midget ketched, and you prob'ly never even seen one throwed. To ketch a midget that's been throwed by a heavy-muscl'd man and is flyin' through the air, you got to run under him and with him and pull your hands and arms back and down when you ketch him, to break the compact of his body, or you'll bust him in two like a matchstick. I seen Bill Lange and Willie Keeler and Tris Speaker make some wonderful ketches in my day, but I never seen nothin' like that center fielder. He goes back and back and still further back and he pulls that midget down outa the air like he was liftin' a sleepin' baby from a cradle. They wasn't a bruise onto him, only his face was the color of cat's meat and he ain't got no air in his chest. In his excitement, the base umpire, who was runnin' back with the center fielder when he ketched Pearl, yells, "Out!" and that give hysterics to the Bethlehem which was ragin' like Niagry on that ball field.

Everybody was hoopin' and hollerin' and yellin' and runnin', with the fans swarmin' onto the field, and the cops tryin' to keep order, and some guys laughin' and some of the women fans cryin', and six or eight of us holdin' onto Magrew to keep him from gettin' at that midget and finishin' him off. Some of the fans picks up the St. Louis pitcher and the center fielder, and starts carryin' 'em around on their shoulders, and they was the craziest goin's-on knowed to the history of organized ball on this side of the 'Lantic Ocean.



I seen Pearl du Monville strugglin' in the arms of a lady fan with a ample bosom, who was laughin' and cryin' at the same time, and him beatin' at her with his little fists and bawlin' and yellin'. He clawed his way loose finely and disappeared in the forest of legs which made that ball field look like it was Coney Island on a hot summer's day.

That was the last I ever seen of Pearl du Monville. I never seen hide nor hair of him from that day to this, and neither did nobody else. He just vanished into the thin of the air, as the fella says. He was ketched for the final out of the ball game and that was the end of him, just like it was the end of the ball game, you might say, and also the end of our losin' streak, like I'm goin' to tell you.

That night we piled onto a train for Chicago, but we wasn't snarlin' and snappin' any more. No, sir, the ice was finely broke and a new spirit come into that ball club. The old zip come back with the disappearance of Pearl du Monville out back a second base. We got to laughin' and talkin' and kiddin' together, and 'fore long Magrew was laughin' with us. He got a human look onto his pan again, and he quit whinin' and complainin' and wishtun' he was in heaven with the angels.

Well, sir, we wiped up that Chicago series, winnin' all four games, and makin' seventeen hits in one of 'em. Funny thing was, St. Louis was so shook up by that last game with us, they never did hit their stride again. Their center fielder took to misjudgin' everything that come his way, and the rest of the fellas followed suit, the way a club'll do when one guy blows up.

'Fore we left Chicago, I and some of the fellas went out and bought a pair of them little baby shots, which we had 'em golded over and give 'em to Magrew for a souvenir, and he took it all in good spirit. Whitey Cott and Billy Klinger made up and was fast friends again, and we hit our home lot like a ton of dynamite and they was nothin' could stop us from then on.

I don't recollect things as clear as I did thirty, forty year ago. I can't read no fine print no more, and the only person I got to check with on the golden days of the national pastime, as the fella says, is my friend, old Milt Kline, over in Springfield, and his mind ain't as strong as it once was.

He gets Rube Waddell mixed up with Rube Marquard, for one thing, and anybody does that oughta be put away where he won't bother nobody. So I can't tell you the exact margin we win the pen-

nant by. Maybe it was two and a half games, or maybe it was three and a half. But it'll all be there in the newspapers and record books of thirty, thirty-one year ago and, like I was sayin', you could look it up.

# A CUP OF COLD TEA

by JOHN ARLOTT

*English first-class cricket—that all-absorbing, walled-in world with its six-hours-a-day, six-days-a-week round of play, charity matches, “away” weekends, and extended overseas tours—is hard on its heroes. It is harder still, in a different way, on its less lustrous players, the non-stars fighting to hold their place among the elite and for whom a poor performance strikes home like a hammer. To feel yourself slipping and possibly on the way out—well, this is particularly hard on a man whose moments of triumph have been few and mild. This is the story of just such an average county cricketer, George Kennett, working out his unspectacular destiny in the special world of cricket which he has lived in and loved for many, many years.*

THE BALL HIT DRIVE lobbed slowly up, seemed to hover a moment before mid-off caught it, and the first innings of the match was over. Hampshire 256 all out. Before the fieldsmen's hands had closed on the ball, long leg, whose name was Kennett, began to walk briskly towards the pavilion.

Ten minutes is not long—it is not long enough. He had been reconciled to that fact for many years, but today it added heavily to the weight of his irritation. “Give us your autograph, mister.” He waved the boy aside. They ought not to let kids pester the players like this. He walked faster. Ten minutes seems even shorter when it comes at half-past five. No one—none of the reporters or the committee members—ever cared that you had gone out to bat after five hours in the field, with only ten minutes to do everything. He smeared the sweat across his forehead with his arm and pushed past several spectators, out of the dry sun-glare, into the dressing-room. The day had seemed all the hotter and harder for being the first after a fortnight out with a split finger; he felt the nag of a blister forming on his right heel.

The little boy pocketed his autograph album philosophically. They never *did* sign as they came off the field anyway. They would later. Keep on at them, that was the thing. "Who is he?" asked his neighbour.

"Kennett," said the autograph hunter authoritatively.

"Has he ever played for England?" The policeman ordered them off the ground, as usual, and as they dawdled away, the enthusiast, rummaging in his satchel, pulled out the cricket *Who's Who*, crumbs from lunch-time sandwiches clinging stickily to its cover. He looked up George Kennett in that mild, biographical and statistical immortality in which cricket registers its performers

"No -- see -- it don't say anything about Test Matches: he's not much good and he must be too old now, anyway."

He felt old. There was an ache at the back of his eyes, a drawn, tender tightness in the skin around them: he could feel the lines of the dust. He looked for his jug of cold tea. Some people had a beer as soon as they came in. All right for bowlers, but not if you were going out to bat. Cold tea was safe; it had always refreshed him, ever since he first asked his mother to save a jug for him after games in the park at home. He knew before he felt the jug that it was lukewarm.

"Damn it, young Hayter, why didn't you get the tea when I told you-- sitting around signing your autograph, I suppose." Jimmy Hayter, whose importance declined to his official rank of twelfth man when the players came in, muttered something half-apologetic and bustled out to the score-box for the bowling figures.

George Kennett ran some cold water into one of the wash basins and stood the jug in it. His shirt clung and twisted as he wriggled out of it. Then he slipped off his rubber-soled boots--the skipper was always making acid remarks about them, but they were the only rest for a cricketer's feet in five months of daily cricket. His flannels tugged at the knees as he kicked them off. Ah, the cold water; handfuls of it, over his face, his thin hair: gloriously over his chest, stomach, thighs. He paused. No: he knew it too well: there is not enough time in the ten minutes between innings for the extra luxury of putting your feet in cold water, powdering them and putting on fresh socks. You are still struggling after the fielding side is out if you try it. He towelled himself, tried to relax as he walked slowly to his place in the dressing-room, took a cigarette out of his blazer pocket and lit it. He leant back against the

varnished matchboarding, closed his eyes; two long, slow draws at the cigarette; the ritual was like a timetable. Up now: he dropped his towel and, as he moved to his bag, the skipper pinned up the batting order. Kennett looked quickly—almost nervously—at it.

Why? he wondered. For six years he had barely bothered to glance at it. He was Norshire's number one. It had made very little difference when, last year, Jim Stevens took first ball instead of himself: he preferred it really, what difference was there between number one and number two, anyway? Yet it seemed to mark the beginning of the slide down the far side of the slope. Now he was half frightened to look until he had seen that no one but Jim Stevens, Jack Connor and himself was hurrying to get ready. There it was, in the skipper's half-neat, half-slapdash hand (initials for the amateurs, even there, the blasted snob)—

Stevens  
Kennett  
Connor  
Wainwright  
Redding  
A. E. Tallis  
Pearce  
D. R. Bridges  
Adam  
Coff  
I. F. Lee

At the bottom, the pompous initials—"K. F. L." Damn him.

As Tallis turned, his eye caught with quick surprise the taut line of Kennett's lean, spare body, naked, crouched as if he were going to spring, as he looked at the batting order. Curse the fellow, did he really think his captain the sort of man to change a player's place in the batting order just like that? The trouble with these fellows was that they could never appreciate the decent tradition in the game. Look at him now, gulping cold tea like a navvy and why didn't the scruffy devil change his socks when he came in after a day's fielding? Why didn't he say something, instead of those blank looks? But why be annoyed by him? The man was a dull player and not a very good one, anyway. Of course, he was cricket mad in his grim Yorkshire way—but what right did that give him to look at his captain so contemptuously because, in an effort to liven up the game, he played a chancy stroke that cost him his wicket? In any case, Kennett would soon be gone: there was no room for sentiment in modern county cricket. The committee had agreed that the captain should have the final word on playing staff and he was going

to use it to get a side that won matches—and won them handsomely. When Kennett went, the committee and the Press would see that he meant business—and bright business—in building the new Norshire team.

George Kennett picked his strap out of his bag, stepped into it, reached for his thigh-pad and began, automatically, to tie it on. Perhaps he was not all that good a player; still, he had been unlucky—just this season, when he needed the breaks.

Although the players' contracts began and ended in March, the renewals were always fixed up in the previous August. He knew the others whose two-year periods finished next March had been approached a week ago. He had heard Tim Pearce and Bob Copp discussing it when he looked in on the dressing-room during the Kent match. No one in the office had said anything to him about a contract when he reported at the County Ground to come to Portsmouth. Most significant of all, none of the players had mentioned the subject on the trip down. They knew what he was only just realizing—that he was going to be sacked.

He looked round the room. The bowlers had their boots off; Frank Copp already had his feet up and, stretched out on the seat, was starting to doze.

As he pulled a clean shirt over his head, his mind nibbled back into the grievance of the fixture list. That split finger had cost him the games against Leicester at Leicester, Sussex at Hove, and Kent at Norchester. Three of the best pitches of the season to bat on, too. There could have been a century—perhaps two—in that lot: say three hundred runs altogether; he would just about have scraped his thousand. The skipper's words at the pre-season meeting echoed back through his mind—not addressed to him by name, but meant for him—"You see, you chaps, it's not just a matter of a thousand runs or fifteen hundred runs; it's the way the runs are made; we've got to entertain the crowds or they won't come--and the committee have made it pretty clear to me that they expect me to get something done about it."

Well, something had been done. Next year, Frank Wjnter, the Australian, would be qualified: an opening bat who got on with it—a fair change-bowler and a great close field. One of the batsmen would have to go to make room for him: there was no doubt now that George Kennett was that "one of the batsmen." At the beginning of the season it was a toss up: it might have been Ellis Wainwright; but now Ellis had twelve hundred runs in the bag: a ton against Leicester at Leicester, just to rub it in. Kennett, the averages in *The Norchester Chronicle* said last night, had made 526 runs at 16.96; and it was well into August. Four more games after this one: Derby at Chesterfield, Lancashire on that

pig of a wicket at Norsea—it wasn't really fit to play on, but they gave it a fixture for the holiday crowds—then Surrey at the Oval and Northants at Rushden.

Again George Kennett cursed himself for being the sort of fool who takes to cricket. The greatest life in the world had seemed to open for him, twenty-three years ago, when they asked him—a sixteen-year-old office-boy—to play a game with the Club and Ground side, and afterwards offered him a job on the ground staff the next spring. That was in 1934 and, if the county had not stayed in the running for the Championship, he must have been given a couple of games with the first team in 1939. He pulled on his batting flannels, nearly as thin as his shirt from so many dry-cleanings as had washed out the line where the turn-ups used to be.

It would have been different if Geoff Thomas had kept the captaincy. They had both been at Salerno: not together, but it was something in common, even though they didn't talk about it. They had played together in a few Service matches out there, too, when things eased up. Tallis was different. Perhaps it had been silly to pull his leg in his first match after he "bought" George Tribe's googly; but any of the lads would have taken it and, after all, a capped pro should be able to pull a youngster's leg: it was meant amiably enough, anyway.

He was still buckling his pads as Jim Stevens picked up bat and gloves and walked to the door "Umps are out, George." The skipper, with a towel on his arm, was on his way to the shower. He looked back over his shoulder. "We don't want to lose a wicket tonight, but don't shut it up—this is a holiday crowd, remember—they want to see a few runs; if you get anything loose, hammer it." How much loose stuff did the blasted man think this side were going to serve up with the new ball? "O.K., skip," said Jim. George Kennett, average county cricketer, grunted and reached into his bag for his gloves.

"Come on, George." A tug at his shirt, a bend of the knees to ease his pads and, blinking in the sudden glare, he and Jim Stevens, each at his own gait and with no hurry, walked through the sputter of polite, unenthusiastic hand-claps, out towards the middle.

As they went, David Bridges put the letter he was reading into his wallet, thought idly that Kennett was a poor devil and thanked God that he, for his very different part, could play this interestingly odd game for fun in the summer holidays from school teaching. Almost aloud, he thought "What a devil of a game this is for the chaps who aren't quite good enough—or does it find them something in the end, somehow?"

As the two batsmen walked out, Stevens broke off his habitual, soft, tuneless whistling to say, "256 will take enough getting on this, let alone

trying to hit these chaps off; but, if he wants it, I suppose he must have it—a couple of fours early on would sweeten him enough.”

Then they were in the middle, and walked to their opposite ends. Stevens fussed a little before he took his guard from Alec Skelding. The field gathered: four short legs and a wide mid-on: two slips, gully and a man between cover and mid-off: no long leg, no third man: an attacking setting. Shackleton was already waiting on his mark to bowl as Stevens turned towards him, almost upright, easy, bat barely touching the ground. It was all very quiet: a hard side, Hampshire: they rarely had many runs in the bag: were long conditioned to the struggle to allow even fewer to the other side. Always this tight opening: Shack and Vic—Shackleton and Cannings—peppering a rash on—and just short of—a length; moving the new ball late; in their element on this Portsmouth wicket where there was always enough “green” for the “quicks” to do something off the seam, with a foot or so of life.

Shackleton ran in, the wind from the sea at his back. The first ball came down on the line of the middle and, just before it pitched, dipped sharply in. Stevens had barely moved: his bat was still drawn warily back as the ball hit his pad. The fifteen people concerned—two batsmen, two umpires, eleven fieldsmen—those out of line as much as those in a position to see, knew that it was missing the leg stump by five or six inches. Yet no appeal seemed almost more hostile than a “shout” would have been. Peter Sainsbury from backward short leg, moved in and, in two quick jerks, the ball had gone from him to Harrison, standing up close to the stumps, and back to Shackleton. Outside it all, round the ring, there was talk: inside the game, it was completely quiet. The next ball, too, was an in-ducker: Stevens was over it and, with the swing, he pushed it hard between Sainsbury and Horton. “Come” and they ran a safe single.

Kennett took his leg-stump guard from Alec Skelding and bent with a cramped determination over his bat. Suddenly it was all different: it was no longer the familiar daily routine, exhilarating yet grim, something which was there always. All at once it became vital and, in another way, precious: a thing to be fought against, yet defended. His senses seemed sharpened like those of a man who has lost someone dear to him. He heard the thump-brush of Shackleton’s run-in; the creak of pads as Harrison bent down behind the stumps. Then the whole world was concentrated into a sharply red cricket ball, its seam a keen, slanted line, holding steady as it came down. His backlift was no more than a gesture; bat and pad were near together as the ball “did” a couple of inches in at him, and hit his left pad. Shack, checking in his follow-through peered down the line and, with a half shake of his head, decided



not to appeal. Watch this chap, always likely to move one the other way off the pitch. The sixth ball did Kennett was over it, wrists slack, the ball fell back off a dead bat "Over." He leant on his bat, tried to look relaxed. he saw his hand was trembling.

The other umpire, Emrys Davies, walked in from square leg, a couple of good ones, at least there was little fear of a bad decision. Vic Cannings bowled twice the ball moved away from the off stump as if it were tugged on a string twice Stevens, well across, lifted his bat and let it go through to Harrison. The third ball was a little farther up, moved late towards slips. Every cautious batting sense in George Kennett cried out, "Leave it, you fool," as Jim Stevens, with a full flow of the bat, went over and hit it, off the middle, through the empty covers. No need to run there was a round of applause as Rayment jogged across to collect the bumbling throw-in from a small boy in the crowd on the boundary.

There was the difference between the two batsmen. Order George Kennett to go for that stroke in the first few minutes and he would be out because he knew he would be out. Cannings kept short of driving-length for the rest of the over. A maiden from Shackleton to Kennett two on the pad, four on the middle of a passive bat. another from Cannings to Stevens, yet another from Shackleton to Kennett.

A man down by the score board shouted, "Come on, Northshire don't send us to sleep. Stevens took a two through mid-off, a single wide of cover point's right hand. Kennett soldiere'd out the over.

Still there was no fieldsmen deep. Stevens was lifting his bat higher, feeling surer, but four balls of the over drove him on to the back foot; two he played, not very happily, on the half-cock. Twenty minutes gone, Northshire eight for no wicket. Stevens 8. Kennett 0. By now the skipper would be out of his bath, watching. To have seen the brightest of the shine off against these two was something but Tallis would not think so. Cannings started a ball outside the leg stump, Kennett half shaped to turn it. checked, it swung across him. Awkwardly, with a quick blackness in his belly, he snatched his bat away. Turning as it went by, he sucked in a quick breath. it missed his off stump by no more than a couple of inches, he had not known it was as close as that. Damn it, he had been all at sea with it, might as well have edged it as not.

He pushed forward to the next ball, played it to Cannings's left and looked for a run, but Jim Stevens was already shaking his head as he looked. The next ball began about middle stump as it moved away, Kennett shuffled quickly across, jabbed it to cover. Even as he played the stroke, Rayment was racing to cut it off. "N—no," he said, restlessly. All right, what did it matter? He had not had a ball he could be

expected to score from; not that Tallis would realize it. Tallis be damned. Give him six balls that could be hit for four and he would hit them for four; six good balls were six good balls, Tallis or no Tallis. As the field crossed he heard Desmond Eagar say to Shackleton, "I want Malcolm to have a try at your end after this."

Malcolm Heath was faster than either of the other two, but not so devilishly, naggingly accurate: there might be the odd one down the leg side. Carefully now: see Shack off, that would be a point to the batsmen. Stevens flicked at Shackleton's inswinger and dragged it wide of Eagar at leg-slip: they ran one. There was a cold ache under Kennett's ribs as he took his stance. A quick back-lift—higher than usual—wait for the swing—no, it was going with his arm. George Kennett pushed his foot firmly down the wicket, his right hand, low on the handle, punched through; he felt the swell against the meat of the bat and, as he lifted his head, saw it racing away through the mid off gap. The clapping rolled across the field and warmed him. Shackleton looked down the wicket at him; "Good shot," he said. He did not mean it, of course; no bowler could, but very civil of him. Still no word from anyone else; these Hampshire fieldsmen never talked any batsmen into confidence.

Better now, though, his shoulders seemed looser; he felt the sweat soft across his back: flexed his arms and dropped easily into his stance. Shackleton ran in again: the inswinger. As he sensed it would move outside his leg stump, Kennett turned to play it down through the short legs. It pitched—and angled back off the green. He had gone too far round; stranded, he dropped his wrists as by second nature, but he felt the pluck of the ball on the outside edge of his bat. There was the shout—"Haaaat"—Harrison was holding the ball high in his right hand.

No need to look at Alec Skelding but—just in case—the old umpire's finger was up and, as Kennett looked, he wagged it at him in humorous reproof. As he turned, bitter disappointment in his face, Leo Harrison grinned sympathetically. "It ain't half a bloomin' game, mate, is it?" he said. These chaps had had bad trots themselves; they knew what it meant, but they were not in the game for their health. As they crossed in the pavilion gateway, Jack Connor, going out to bat, gave him, from habit more than anything else, "Hard lines" and then, "Still moving?" "Yes; that ducked in and then left me off the track," "That'd be good enough for me, too." Kennett brushed through the formal sympathy in the dressing-room, avoiding Tallis's eye as Tallis avoided his; went on to his corner, stripped and went into the shower. The water—hot, tepid, cold—was like a balm to his aching shoulders and feet.

A couple of pints in the bar afterwards was part of his day's cricket. It had probably always been like this; in a crowd of a dozen or more

players from the two sides, no one was going to fall round a man's neck because he was off his game. Jim Stevens or Tim Pearce might have said something, but all the talk was general—deliberately general?—or just his imagination? "Well bowled, Shack," he said. Derek Shackleton grinned, "Not a bad one was it?—I keep it up my sleeve for the awkward customers."

Supper at the hotel would raise too many problems he was not ready to face. If it had been a home game, now. Betty had never learnt anything about cricket. It was not that she disliked it, it simply had no meaning for her. If he made runs, then she was pleased with cricket, because he was happy. If he did not want to talk, she was content to make odd remarks he did not hear, expecting no reply. He bought an evening paper to read over supper in the little Italian restaurant. There it was, in the *Stop Press*, "Kennett caught Harrison bowled Shackleton 4 Norshire 28 for one: close."

He saw a little group—Keith Adam, Bob Copp, Ellis Wainwright and Jim Stevens—in the hotel lounge as he went through the hall to the lift and up to bed. A good idea to have had those few beers on the way back; get to sleep easier—would not think Hell—he would *have* to think about it pretty soon. Not a county cricketer any more: not George Kennett the Norshire opening bat but "George Kennett—remember him?—used to play for Norshire."

All at once he became conscious of his clenched fists, clamped teeth and tensed arms. What is this? Pull yourself together, Kennett. It was always going to happen, it has only come a season or so sooner than you thought. Whenever it had come you would have felt it was too soon. There will be some sort of job. umpiring—that would keep him in the game—or coach at a school, making young players. He knew that would not do. He had too much playing still in him. The Leagues? He had thought of that before, but the League clubs wanted men who made their runs fast—star pros.

There would be work. At worst, some sort of labouring job. He would not starve, he had had his fun: and, in his heart, he knew it had been fun. If he had wanted to make money he would never have become a cricket pro. Now he had to pay for it. Only relax, man: go to sleep; there is nothing you can do about it. Tallis, luck; all right, that just makes a season's difference. One minute he was realizing he could not get to sleep; the next, it was morning and he was waking. Morning tea; as he lifted his head, he felt the ache still in his stomach. But it was all settled now.

He savoured—as he had never quite savoured it before—the late morning of the cricketer, the comparative luxury of a middle-class hotel.

It would not be like this next summer. He walked into the dining-room to the usual away match breakfast scene. Round a group of tables, morning papers, propped against tea-pots, provided the basis for the county cricketer's stock conversation—county cricket. Each score of the other matches came in for analysis; without rancour, envy or delight but with professional interest. As he went to his table he heard Tim Pearce, the senior pro, saying to Tallis, "Either Hayter, or send back for Phillips, skipper—not much in it either way, I don't think. . . ." As he half-consciously waited for the conversation to go on, it ended, still in the air. With a drowning feeling, he realized that it had stopped because they had seen him. They were discussing which of the ground staff lads to play in his place in the next match. Dropped; somehow, he had not thought of that. To finish at the end of the season, that was how these things happened. No, they didn't; they happened just like this. "Kennett stands down to allow young Hayter, one of the county's promising young players, to gain first-class experience." He himself had first come in for old Ted Jelfs in the August games. He recalled, for the first time since it happened, Ted wishing him luck that day; Ted's face; ten years ago.

As he sat down at the table opposite Keith Adam—"See what Don Sheppard did to Warwick, George? -eight for 32." "Must have had a bit of rain" he heard himself say. He reached out for the teapot and gradually the murmur of talk washed over him. Yorkshire were winning; good: so were Surrey—and after a bad start, too . . . the pattern of the previous day's play ticked into his mind from the talk.

It was an easy walk to the ground through the morning sun. Once there, with nine more Northshire wickets to go down, his was the clearest day of all. Time for a couple of cups of coffee and then idle watching as Stevens, Connor, Wainwright and Redding gave the innings a steady grounding: 130 for three at lunch. No need to hurry over the invariable cold meat, salad, biscuits and cheese of the county cricketer's midday, that constant summer diet which the player eats almost without noticing it.

The sun had gone behind dark clouds and, sitting back on the veranda, Kennett watched Redding edge Cannings for Barnard, at slip, to make a full-length dive look casual and catch him no more than an inch off the grass. As Tallis walked confidently out, one member turned to another in the pavilion seats with "Ah, Tallis; he'll liven things up—a real stroke-player." Kennett, behind them, grinned sourly: if they did not know the difference between a stroke-maker and a Flash Harry, how did they understand what they were watching? Tallis followed his first

ball from Cannings—deliberately pitched a foot outside the off stump—and hit it magnificently through the covers for four. The first member turned to his neighbour—"What did I tell you—fine stuff."

While Wainwright went steadily, Tallis drove: twice he hit across the line of the ball from Shackleton with such eye and timing as to reach the long-on boundary. Wainwright, trying to hook Heath, dragged the ball into his stumps. With Pearce as his partner, Tallis reached 45, went for another stroke across the line and the ball steepled up so high that the batsmen had crossed before Shackleton caught it: 195 for five. Bridges, the incoming batsman, passed him with a smile. "Well hit." "Thanks—keep it going, will you—I'd like to declare at tea." "I'll do my best."

Pearce hooked Heath for a solid enough four; he followed the next ball round and Harrison, standing back, dived and caught him: 199 for six. Before Adam could reach the wicket a stinging shower came down; five minutes of it, not heavy enough to delay play at all after it cleared, but enough to put another yard of lift in the always well-grassed Portsmouth wicket. A four to Bridges and then another shower drove the players in. When they came out, Hampshire took the new ball. Eagar himself caught Bridges, after a few forcing strokes—diving at leg-slip, off Cannings. Shackleton bowled Adam and had Lee caught by Marshall in the gully off a spinning mishit. Norshure were all out, almost exactly at tea time, for 221. As they came in, another heavy scud drove briefly over the ground.

"What do you think of it, Pearce?"

"She'll do quite a bit skipper, it always lifts a lot here when it's wet on top and hard underneath, like this. I expect they'll have the heavy on it, but it will wear off after four or five overs and then it'll give the quickies everything."

Kennett was already in his place at long leg when Roy Marshall and Jimmy Gray came out to start the Hampshire second innings with a lead of 35, only a slight reassurance with such a lively wicket in prospect. Eagar had, indeed, ordered the heavy roller and, when Lee dropped his first ball short, it rose only a little more than hip high. Marshall, most militant of opening bats, swung round viciously at it, hit a little late and sent it, curling and spinning, towards long leg. Kennett, already walking in as the stroke was played, began to run, but then he saw it would drop well short of him. No point in playing to the gallery: a running forward dive would still leave him short of it. He moved back and round, judged the bounce and spin carefully, took it chest-high on the first bounce and dropped his throw accurately into Pearce's hands by the stumps as Gray made his ground for the single. He caught Tallis

looking at him as he turned to walk back and heard the clap of his hands as he said, "Come on, now, fellows, come on." As he trotted in at the end of the over, the captain was waiting for him. "What the devil—weren't you watching?—if you had been in the game, that was a catch, Kennett: no side can afford to give this chap Marshall a life and I see that as a catch missed—you must try these chances." For a second he was more surprised than angry; Tallis had turned his back on him before he could speak. As the anger swelled up into his throat, Jim Stevens walked across in front of him, "Think we are in for more rain, George?" He almost smiled: "Thanks, Jim."

Gray took a smart single and Marshall, twisting on to the back foot, forced two fours through the off side field in Copp's over. As Lee began to bowl again, Kennett caught Tallis's signal to move round square. He cantered away to his left but, before he had even reached his new position, Gray glanced the first ball fine. Checking, Kennett dug his toes in to turn back: as he did so, he felt the damp grass slide under him; flat on his chest, he lifted his head to see the ball going over the fine-leg boundary. A man near the sight screen threw it in to the wicket and, as Kennett brushed the grass and mud off his flannels, he sensed—and then saw—Tallis coming out to him from short-leg.

"Get into the pavilion and put spikes on, Kennett: those blasted creepers could cost us this match."

"But these *are* spikes—I wouldn't wear rubbers after a shower."

"Then the spikes must be in bloody poor shape—see they are fixed."

He bit back the words he wanted to say; all that came out was a husky "Right." He ran quickly to his place; his chest was tight; his eyes were stinging—heavens, he was a grown man; was this tears? Forget it—hadn't he decided with himself last night that it was all over?

The old hands were right. In Lee's third over a ball stood up and cracked Jimmy Gray on the elbow. Even Bob Copp, a yard less pacey, brushed a couple past Marshall's chest. Then it was "on." It had to be pace now: seam straight between the fingers, arm high, plenty of wrist and dig it in, short of a length. Tallis plastered men up close to the bat. Gray, determined and watchful, began to take a beating: allowing three or even four balls of the over to hit his body rather than push his bat into the danger of the lifter. Marshall, at the other end, tilted at the windmills. One great soaring hook passed high above Kennett's head into the crowd. Once, young Lee, eager to bowl, sent one too far up and Marshall whipping his bat into the half-volley, drove it over the sight screen. 50 for none. This was bad business for Northshire; there should have been four Hampshire wickets down by now. Only Wainwright,

apart from Copp and Lee, bowled at the pace to use this wicket. Hampshire, of course, always took three main seamers—Cannings, Shackleton and Heath—into their games at Portsmouth, as well as Gray and Barnard as medium-pace changes. Norshire's three spinners were a sheer waste here. A credit mark, over and above his batting, to Wainwright if he did anything. Kennett thought ruefully of his own bowling. Once he fancied himself as a leg-spinner—a roller really, but steady. He had in fact had one or two good sets of figures. He remembered the spell, on a batsman's wicket at Fenners, which had its place in his record in the cricket annuals. Old Phil Ashmore, the county coach, had warned him against it in 1949. "You want to forget this bowling, young Kennett: they'll always be using you on good tracks, and you don't want to go out to bat straight away after ten or a dozen overs." The county had plenty of spinners, anyway; so he had turned it in. Tallis knew about it: "You gave up your bowling, Kennett, didn't you?" "Yes, skipper, I did: I was too fast off the bat." Of course he should have sounded keener: it wasn't that he was too lazy to bowl: he would have liked it well enough but, if he talked himself on now, he could easily get a lot of stick: you have to bowl leg-breaks regularly to bowl them well.

A brief word between Tallis and Tim Pearce, and Wainwright came on for Lee who pulled on his second sweater and walked off to third man, muttering at his failure. Then the wickets began to fall. Copp made one leave Jim Gray off the pitch, it touched the edge of his high back-stroke on the way to Tim Pearce's gloves. Henry Horton, after trying his steady, straight, defensive bat against bowling that spat off the pitch, began to drive. One rounded stroke ran through mid-on, another flew off the edge through slips: but soon he found himself playing off his face and Tallis, at short leg, took an easy catch. Still Marshall threw his bat at the lifting ball, secure enough, in fact, from being bowled since any ball which came through low enough to hit the stumps would have to be a half-volley—and no one proposed to offer Marshall that invitation to a certain four.

Rayment set out to play strokes, made one or two and then, aiming a cover drive, saw the ball fly up to the splice and loft away so that David Bridges had to run in from cover to catch it. Tallis brought Lee back in place of Wainwright. Certainly he would be half-stiff and not properly rested from his earlier spell, but they must strike now. "Sorry, Frank, but there's only an hour to go—give it everything you've got." Marshall took 10 off his settling-down over and then was caught off his gloves by Adam, at forward short leg. Mike Barnard made a couple of spectacular drives on the rise: Desmond Eagar swept a bouncer from Lee down to long leg— one bounce into the crowd -- but like Sainsbury

who, head down, tried to battle it out, they went to Lee and Copp before the close at seven. Harrison and Shackleton lived out the last ten minutes, and Hampshire finished the day 120 for seven wickets.

Back in the dressing-room, Tallis adopted the Napoleonic air which each of the pros, in his different way, resented. "We should be winning if we had got rid of Marshall at the start" (no one looked at Kennett) "but I think we can still beat them: this wicket will have dried out easy by the morning." No one said anything. "Eh, Pearce?" "If it can rain this afternoon, it can rain tomorrow, Mr. Tallis." "Ah, you're an old pessimist, Pearce." "No, we must have a chance, but they are a hundred-and-fifty-five on, and this is never an easy one to bat on."

For the second time in his cricketering life, George Kennett spent a night at an away match alone. Something, which he supposed was pride, would not let him talk to any of his friends about packing up. To have been with them while he—and they—avoided the thing which filled him would have been even worse.

He had supper again in the Italian café and walked idly on the long promenade, all but emptied by the gusty wind. Old matches came back into his mind and, carefully avoiding any thought of practicalities, he soaked himself gently in nostalgia. When he woke next morning the wind was still rattling his window and there was rain on the panes. At breakfast, the communal newspaper-reading was punctuated with talk of the wicket. There had, it seemed, been steady light rain for three or four hours in the night (do cricketers stay awake timing the rainfall or, if not, how can they be so sure?). The general impression was that there had been just about enough to keep the wicket angry. At the ground, the groundsman, non-committally, thought that might be so. Eagar told him not to use the roller. Let it get worse.

Copp bowled from the pavilion end and Shackleton, swinging at his third ball, hit it over the top of mid-on. Trying to do it again, he was caught by Bridges. Cannings, to his comic annoyance, played a short ball down on to his wicket in the next over. Malcolm Heath watched Harrison hit a boundary and then a three off Lee and, as the wicket recovered its venom, take most of a maiden over from Copp on his body. Heath missed three lifters from Lee before he waved his bat at a straight half-volley and was bowled. Harrison was left high and dry with 17: the three outstanding wickets had gone down in a quarter of an hour and Hampshire were all out, 131.

The few scattered spectators calculated on their score-cards that Northshire wanted 167 to win and, including the extra half hour to five o'clock, had five hours all but five minutes to get them in "34 runs an hour," announced a small boy, after laborious calculation.



George Kennett looked at no one, spoke to no one, but began to get ready. Tallis picked up a batting-order sheet. Opposite the figure 1, he wrote "Stevens." Then he hesitated. What were the chances that, if he opened himself, he might hit a quick twenty or so before the effect of the heavy roller wore off? He looked at Kennett, who was putting on his batting flannels, and shook his head with irritation. "Kennett," he wrote, at number 2.

George Kennett had never felt quite like this before: certainly not when sober. There was a lightness in his chest, his face was warm, as if he was blushing; he felt as if he wanted to sing and he grinned at himself. Tallis's voice cut through his mood. "There is only one thing to do, fellows—we have got to hit our way out of this: if we go down, at least let's go down with our flags flying and all our guns firing." David Bridges wished Tallis was not so embarrassingly grand with his clichés: "corny" was the word; no wonder the pros had nothing to say.

The opening pair walked to the door. "Get on with it before the rolling wears off." "All right, skipper," from Jim Stevens. Kennett looked at his captain, but did not see him or think of him.

Derek Shackleton's first ball to Stevens left on the pitch the ominous black bruise which marks the "green 'un." Stevens hooked him chancily, but mightily, for four. Kennett edged Cannings' outswinger, whipping round, he saw Barnard sprawling as the ball passed wide of him, they took two. It should not happen again. He dug in.

Tallis turned angrily to David Bridges. "Damn that bloody Kennett: why doesn't he go for runs while there's a chance? I should never have sent him in." Bridges looked him in the face. "Poor devil, he only lives for this silly game, and that is how he plays it."

Minute by minute the grass sprung back to its true plum. Stevens twice hooked Shackleton off his chest; made a hectic 32 before, playing in front of his face, he saw Sainsbury tumble forward to take the catch. Kennett, flexing and tensing his finger to make sure that the lifter from Cannings had not broken it, saw Keith Adam coming out to bat—sent in to swing for quick runs. As he went by Adam jerked at him, "Skipper says to hit." Kennett did not answer. he watched Adam flail at his first ball: yorked by Shackleton. He barely noticed Jack Connor coming in to get his head down at the other end. There were the minutes of silver, bought with pain which, oddly, did not hurt. There was nothing outside this leather ball, the friend and enemy of all his fears and hopes ever since his father first bowled under-arm to him in their little backyard, with the clothes line overhead to mark the straightness of the bowling. Heath had come on, his arm as high as a lamp-post: get the bat out of the line: again the ball thudded against his ribs. Don't rub it: that only

encourages the bowler. There was the harsh drag of the seam across his chest: was the wetness sweat or blood? He looked: just a little sweat. He thought idly that, if only he were fatter—as fat as Tim Pearce—the ball would thud on him instead of cracking. Just now and again, if you were behind the line one “did it” soon enough and short enough to be pushed for a single. One from Heath leapt at his face and he hooked it from before his eyes for six. Back into the groove. Connor was gone: caught Barnard, bowled Cannings; 16. It was Wainwright who walked in to lunch with him. They had been lads on the staff together. Only, “Well played, George.” He did not answer.

He sat through lunch in the dressing-room: not too lazy to take off his pads, but wanting to feel them there Jimmy Hayter brought him a jug of cold tea. Then out again: Ellis Wainwright; beaten by the pace ball after ball, but hanging on until Cannings, at short third man to Heath, caught him, head-high, off the shoulder of the bat. After that, young Bill Redding: going to be a good player; watches it well. Barnard coming on? - why? His first ball was on a length and leapt, spitefully; drop the wrists; it ground into his solar plexus. So that was why: watch his pace off the wicket; safe enough if you do, he's not moving it. Play or leave. If you play, be sure of middling it. Redding's ten runs were worth fifty; but he was not quite to the pitch of one from Heath he tried to drive. Henry Horton took the lobbed catch easily: 106 for five. Kennett walked away from the wicket, looked neither towards the pavilion nor the opposite end until he saw Heath moving in to bowl at Tallis. The first ball was over-pitched and Tallis drove it magnificently through mid-off. The next—the last ball of the over—reared from short of a length: short—hookable. Tallis pulled back as it whined past his head: pulled too far back and Kennett saw his face suddenly white. Eagar brought on Jimmy Gray. Damn it—he had forgotten how much this chap swung even a worn ball; he was just in time to play the big inswinger, awkwardly, half behind his pad, and drop his bat on it as it rolled on. A single off the next ball. Tallis middled the sixth towards the gap between the bowler and wide mid-off: “No,” he said. Why? There was an easy single in it. Kennett looked down the wicket at his captain and knew; the man was frightened, trying to keep away from Malcolm Heath. Tallis looked back defiantly, knowing that he knew.

Again Kennett hooked Heath over the short legs. In Gray's next over, Tallis, pushing with the swing, missed; Harrison took the ball wide of the leg stump and, as the batsman lifted his back foot, stumped him. 115 for six: 52 to get.

Tim Pearce, a touch of comedy in his half-waddling walk, but his

weathered face solemn, passed him with a nod and "Plenty of time before five." Shackleton for Heath: Kennett pushed him for one, wide of cover point's right hand.

The applause crackled round the ground: Shackleton was clapping. Kennett looked at the scoreboard: under the number 2 were the figures 50. He touched his cap: the applause went on; he pulled off his cap; the sun had bleached its original blue to a faded purple; the thought occurred to him that it would have been a waste of money to have bought a new one for this season. Shackleton pushed one at his leg stump: and it angled back off the seam: he was in line all right, but not ready for so much lift: too late to leave it now: get your body behind it. There was an agony of lights as it drove his split finger against the bat handle. Yet, after the first stab, it was clear and cool, like water. "All right, George?" It was Harrison from behind the stumps. He must have staggered—or cursed—"Yes, right as rain."

"Well, if you're all right, I must be better than I feel." Nod.

Wait, wait, wait: the runs will come. Never mind the applause for the maiden overs, laugh at that bloody fool trying to start a slow handclap. Tim Pearce was old in this game, content to wait for that one down the leg side and slap it gratefully for four

Another? It cut back and bowled the senior pro—leg stump—through the middle of his glance. 143 for seven. Bridges to come, then nothing: Bob Copp and young Lee were not worth a light. But Bridges was an amateur; he would not fancy this stuff. David Bridges was almost respectful. "Take what you can, Kennett: I'll do my damndest, but I'm out of my class." They plugged on. Bridges played and missed, played and missed, but always his body was behind it: he cursed and rubbed, but did not flinch. Heath came back. Keep Bridges away from this: keep him away from Shackleton, too. A single off Heath left Bridges the last ball of the over: he chased it outside the off stump, edged it: grinned shamefacedly as it beat the field and went for four. Carry on. It grew no easier: damn it he did not want it easier. As Heath bowled, Kennett saw his body shake with effort: the bouncer. he hooked, but late, swung round behind the ball, half-hit it and, as he turned, saw Eagar throw himself into the line of it, but below it. Horton at long leg was not bothering to run in for it. "Well played." They were there. He looked again at the scoreboard as it ticked up to 167 and—under Batsman 2—72.

It seemed very dark in the dressing-room. "Thanks," he said, "thanks." In the shower, alone, his body cold with tiredness, he caught sight of himself in the mirror, his flesh grey under the electric light and pied with the marks of the ball, the red circles purpled on the line of the seam.

"Have a drink, Kennett?" It was David Bridges. "I'll be out in the bar in a minute—thank you." Slowly back to his seat; his clothes were the last left on any hook; the bags round him ready packed and strapped for the next match. He looked incuriously at the letter on the corner of the table. "Mr. George Kennett." He turned it disinterestedly; the flap bore the stamp "Thomas & Sons." Geoff Thomas—his old skipper—must be the family business he went to manage—a factory or something. He pushed a bruised finger under the flap.

*Dear Kennett,*

*I wonder if you would be interested in the post of groundsman at our works ground? Pethick has just retired on pension and it occurred to me that you would soon be looking for a permanent job. If you feel like striking out now, and if the county can release you, it could be worth while. The pay would be about the same as you are getting now, and the house and sports goods shop go with the job.*

*Your only fixed duties would be the ground and some coaching. You would, however, be an asset to the works team. My father is President of this county club, which plays in the Minor Counties competition: they badly need an opener of your experience and we would make you free to play regularly for them if you cared to do so.*

*You could take over in September and I hope you will—I for my part should be very happy to renew our old association.*

*Yours sincerely,  
Geoffrey Thomas.*

Bridges and Tallis were near the door as Kennett made his way to the bar: he heard Bridges say, "... not the kind of thing Norshire can afford to lose."

Tim Pearce turned with a pint of beer for him. "Cheers"—the mugs were lifted. Then Tallis was at his side. "Well played, Kennett—give me just a moment and then the next one is on me."

"Yes, skipper."

"I don't mind telling you, I had not asked the committee to renew your contract—I believe in being frank—but that innings of yours today took a lot of guts: I can't promise you a regular place, with Winter coming in next season; but you would certainly start as first reserve batsman; you could be useful with the staff lads and I'll try to get you anyway a year's contract—with match money when you are in the first team, of course."

"Thanks, skipper, but I've made up my mind to retire at the end of the season"—he hesitated—"but I'd like to see the season out with the side." Tallis smiled—with some relief, as Kennett recognized—

"Well, you know your own business best; all right—now, have a drink—a jolly good innings."

As Kennett lifted his glass, the stiffening bruise on his elbow made him wince. Leo Harrison, beside him, caught his quick intake of breath and looked him half-solemnly in the eyes, "Not half a blooming game, is it?"

# SNOW WORLD

*from*

## THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN

*by* THOMAS MANN

*The hero of The Magic Mountain, Thomas Mann's monumental novel which is, among other things, a symbolic study of the sickness of Europe in the years directly preceding World War I, is a young German named Hans Castorp. A sensitive and beleaguered young man who has developed tuberculosis, Castorp has gone to the famous Berghof Sanitarium in the Swiss mountains to see if he can recover his health. Throughout this enforced habitation, Castorp, restless and confined to limited activity, has only too much time to meditate on the enigmatic aspects of his own incomplete life and the meaning of human existence. One day, as this excerpt relates, the beauty of the snow-covered slopes, and their promise of warm solitude, is just too much for Hans to resist. He gathers his skis and pushes off into the beckoning day*

DAILY, five times a day, the guests expressed unanimous dissatisfaction with the kind of winter they were having. They felt it was not what they had a right to expect of these altitudes. It failed to deliver the renowned meteorological specific in anything like the quantity indicated by the prospectus, quoted by old inhabitants, or anticipated by new. There was a very great failure in the supply of sunshine, an element so important in the cures achieved up here that without it they were distinctly retarded. And whatever Herr Settem-

brini might think of the sincerity of the patients' desire to finish their cure, leave "home" and return to the flatland, at any rate they insisted on their just dues. They wanted what they were entitled to, what their parents or husbands had paid for, and they grumbled unceasingly, at table, in lift, and in hall. The management showed a consciousness of what it owed them by installing a new apparatus for heliotherapy. They had two already, but these did not suffice for the demands of those who wished to get sunburned by electricity—it was so becoming to the ladies, young and old, and made all the men, though confirmed horizontalers, look irresistibly athletic. And the ladies, even though aware of the mechanico-cosmetical origin of this conquering-hero air, were foolish enough to be carried away by it. There was Frau Schonfeld, a red-haired, red-eyed patient from Berlin. In the salon she looked thirstily at a long-legged, sunken-chested gallant, who described himself on his visiting card as "*Aviateur diplômé et Enseigne de la Marine allemande*." He was fitted out with the pneumothorax and wore "smoking" at the midday meal but not in the evening, saying this was their custom in the navy. "My God," breathed Frau Schonfeld at him, "what a tan this demon has—he gets it from the helio—it makes him look like a hunter of eagles!" "Just wait, nixie!" he whispered in her ear in the lift, "I'll make you pay for looking at me like that!" It made goose flesh and shivers run over her. And along the balconies, past the glass partitions, the demon eagle hunter found his way to the nixie.

But the artificial sun was far from making up for the lack of the real one. Two or three days of full sunshine in the month—it was not good enough, gorgeous though these were, with deep, deep velvety blue sky behind the white mountain summits, a glitter as of diamonds and a fine hot glow on the face and the back of the neck, when they dawned resplendent from the prevailing thick mantle of gray mist. Two or three such days in the course of weeks could not satisfy people whose lot might be said to justify extraordinary demands from the external world. They had made an inward compact, by the terms of which they resigned the common joys and sorrows proper to flatland humanity, and in exchange were made free of a life that was, to be sure, inactive, but on the other hand very lively and diverting, and carefree to the point of making one forget altogether the flight of time. Thus it was not much good for the Hofrat to tell them how favorably the Berghof compared with a Siberian mine or a penal settlement, nor to sing the praises of the atmosphere, so thin and light,

well-nigh as rare as the empty universal ether, free of earthly admixture whether good or bad, and even without actual sunshine to be preferred to the rank vapors of the plain. Despite all he could say, the gloomy disaffection gained ground, threats of unlicensed departure were the order of the day, were even put into execution, without regard for the warning afforded by the melancholy return of Frau Salomon to the fold, now a "life member," her tedious but not serious case having taken that turn by reason of her self-willed visit to her wet and windy Amsterdam.

But if they had no sun, they had snow. Such masses of snow as Hans Castorp had never till now in all his life beheld. The previous winter had done fairly well in this respect, but it had been as nothing compared to this. The snowfall was monstrous and immeasurable, it made one realize the extravagant, outlandish nature of the place. It snowed day in, day out, and all through the night. The few roads kept open were like tunnels, with towering walls of snow on either side, crystal and alabaster surfaces that were pleasant to look at, and on which the guests scribbled all sorts of messages, jokes and personalities. But even this path between walls was above the level of the pavement, and made of hard-packed snow, as one could tell by certain places where it gave way, and let one suddenly sink in up to the knee. One might, unless one were careful, break a leg. The benches had disappeared, except for the high back of one emerging here and there. In the town, the street level was so raised that the shops had become cellars, into which one descended by steps cut in the snow.

And on all these lying masses more snow fell, day in, day out. It fell silently, through air that was moderately cold, perhaps twenty to thirty degrees of frost. One did not feel the cold, it might have been much less, for the dryness and absence of wind deprived it of sting. The mornings were very dark, breakfast was taken by the light of the artificial moon that hung from the vaulted ceiling of the dining room, above the gay stenciled border. Outside was the reeking void, the world enwrapped in gray-white cotton wool, packed to the windowpanes in snow and mist. No sight of the mountains; of the nearest evergreens now and again a glimpse through the fog, standing laden, and from time to time shaking free a bough of its heavy load, that flew into the air, and sent a cloud of white against the gray. At ten o'clock the sun, a wan wisp of light, came up behind its mountain, and gave the indistinguishable scene some shadowy hint of life, some sallow glimmer of reality; yet even so, it retained its delicate ghostliness, its lack of any definite line for the eye to follow. The contours



of the peaks dissolved, disappeared, were dissipated in the mist, while the vision, led on from one pallidly gleaming slope of snow to another, lost itself in the void. Then a single cloud, like smoke, lighted up by the sun, might spread out before a wall of rock and hang there for long, motionless.

At midday the sun would half break through, and show signs of banishing the mist. In vain—yet a shred of blue would be visible, and suffice to make the scene, in its strangely falsified contours, sparkle marvelously far and wide. Usually, at this hour, the snowfall stopped, as though to have a look at what it had done; a like effect was produced by the rare days when the storm ceased, and the uninterrupted power of the sun sought to thaw away the pure and lovely surface from the new-fallen masses. The sight was at once fairylike and comic, an infantine fantasy. The thick light cushions plumped up on the boughs of trees, the humps and mounds of snow-covered rock cropping or undergrowth, the droll, dwarfish, crouching disguise all ordinary objects wore, made of the scene a landscape in gnomeland, an illustration for a fairy tale. Such was the immediate view—wearisome to move in, quaintly, roguishly stimulating to the fancy. But when one looked across the intervening space, at the towering marble statuary of the high Alps in full snow, one felt a quite different emotion, and that was awe of their majestic sublimity.

Afternoons between three and four, Hans Castorp lay in his balcony box, well wrapped, his head against the cushion, not too high or too low, of his excellent chair, and looked out at forest and mountain over his thick-upholstered balustrade. The snow-laden firs, dark green to blackness, went marching up the sides of the valley, and beneath them the snow lay soft like down pillows. Above the tree line, the mountain walls reared themselves into the gray-white air: huge surfaces of snow, with softly veiled crests, and here and there a black jut of rock. The snow came silently down. The scene blurred more and more, it inclined the eye, gazing thus into woolly vacuity, to slumber. At the moment of slipping off one might give a start—yet what sleep could be purer than this in the icy air? It was dreamless. It was as free from the burden—even the unconscious burden—of organic life, as little aware of an effort to breathe this contentless, weightless, imperceptible air as is the breathless sleep of the dead. When Hans Castorp stirred again, the mountains would be wholly lost in a cloud of snow; only a pinnacle, a jutting rock, might show one instant, to be rapt away the next. It was absorbing to watch these ghostly pranks; one needed to keep alert to follow the transmutations, the veiling and

unveiling One moment a great space of snow-covered rock would reveal itself, standing out bold and free, though of base or peak naught was to be seen But if one ceased to fix one's gaze upon it, it was gone, in a breath

Then there were storms so violent as to prevent one's sitting on the balcony for the driven snow which blew in in such quantity as to cover floor and chair with a thick mantle Yes even in this sheltered valley it knew how to storm The thin air would be in a hurly-burly, so whirling full of snow one could not see a hand's breadth before one's face Gusts strong enough to take one's breath away flung the snow about, drew it up cyclone fashion from the valley floor to the upper air, whisked it about in the maddest dance, no longer a snow-storm it was a blinding chaos a white dark a monstrous dereliction on the part of this inordinate and violent region, no living creature save the snow hunting—which suddenly appeared in troops—could flourish in it

And yet Hans Castorp loved this snowy world He found it not unlike life at the seashore The monotony of the scene was in both cases profound The snow so deep and light, so dry and spotless was the sand of down below One was as clean as the ether you could shake the snow from boot and clothing just as you could the fine ground, dustless stone and shell product of the sea's depth—neither left trace behind And walking in the snow was as toilsome as on the dunes, unless, indeed a crust had come upon it by dint of thawing and freezing, when the going became easy and pleasant like marching along the smooth, hard wet, and resilient strip of sand close to the edge of the sea

But the storms and high-fied drift of this year gave pedestrians small chance They were favorable only for skiing The snow plough, laboring its best, barely kept free the main street of the settlement and the most indispensable paths Thus the few short feasible stretches were always crowded with other walkers, ill and well the native the permanent guest, and the hotel population and these in their turn were bumped by the sleds as they swung and swerved down the slopes, steered by men and women who leaned far back as they came on, and shouted importunately, being obsessed by the importance of their occupation Once at the bottom they would turn and trundle their toy sleds uphill again

Hans Castorp was thoroughly sick of all the walks He had two desires one of them, the stronger, was to be alone with his thoughts and his stock-taking projects; and this his balcony assured to him.

But the other, allied unto it, was a lively craving to come into close and freer touch with the mountains, the mountains in their snowy desolation; toward them he was irresistibly drawn. Yet how could he, all unprovided and footbound as he was, hope to gratify such a desire? He had only to step beyond the end of the shoveled paths—an end soon reached upon any of them—to plunge breast-high in the snowy element.

Thus it was Hans Castorp, on a day in his second winter with those up here, resolved to buy himself skis and learn to walk on them, enough, that is, for his purposes. He was no sportsman, had never been physically inclined to sport; and did not behave as though he were, as did many guests of the cure, dressing up to suit the mode and the spirit of the place. Hermine Kleefeld, for instance, among other females, though she was constantly blue in the face from lack of breath, loved to appear at luncheon in tweed knickers, and loil about after the meal in a basket chair in the hall, with her legs sprawled out. Hans Castorp knew that he would meet with a refusal were he to ask the Hofrat to counterance his plan. Sports activities were unconditionally forbidden at the Berghof as in all other establishments of the kind. This atmosphere, which one seemed to breathe in so effortlessly, was a severe strain on the heart, and as for Hans Castorp personally, his lively comment on his own state, that "getting used to being up here consisted in getting used to not getting used," had continued in force. His fever, which Rhadamanthus ascribed to a moist spot, remained obstinate. Why else indeed should he be here? His desire, his present purpose was then clearly inconsistent and inadmissible. Yet we must be at pains to understand him aright. He had no wish to imitate the fresh-air faddists and smart pseudo-sportsmen, who would have been equally eager to sit all day and play cards in a stuffy room, if only that had been interdicted by authority. He felt himself a member of another and closer community than this small tourist world, a new and a broader point of view, a dignity and restraint set him apart and made him conscious that it would be unfitting for him to emulate their rough-and-tumbling in the snow. He had no escapade in view, his plans were so moderate that Rhadamanthus himself, had he known, might well have approved them. But the rules stood in the way, and Hans Castorp resolved to act behind his back.

He took occasion to speak to Herr Settembrini of his plan—who for sheer joy could have embraced him. "*Si, si, si!* Do so, do so, Engineer, do so with the blessing-of God! Ask after nobody's leave, but simply do it! Ah, your good angel must have whispered you the

thought! Do it straightway, before the impulse leaves you. I'll go along, I'll go to the shop with you, and together we will acquire the instruments of this happy inspiration. I would go with you even into the mountains, I would be by your side, on winged feet, like Mercury's—but that I may not. May not! If that were all, how soon would I do it! That I cannot is the truth, I am a broken man.—But you—it will do you no harm, none at all, if you are sensible and do nothing rash. Even—even if it did you harm—just a little harm—it will still have been your good angel roused you to it. I say no more. Ah, what an unsurpassable plan! Two years up here, and still capable of such projects—ah, yes, your heart is sound, no need to despair of you. Bravo, bravo! By all means pull the wool over the eyes of your Prince of Shadows! Buy the snowshoes, have them sent to me or Lukacek, or the chandler belowstairs. You fetch them from here to go and practice, you go off on them——”

So it befell. Under Herr Settembrini's critical eye—he played the connoisseur, though innocent of sports—Hans Castorp acquired a pair of oaken skis, finished a light brown, with tapering, pointed ends and the best quality of straps. He bought the ironshod staff with the little wheel, as well, and was not content to have his purchases sent, but carried them on his shoulder to Settembrini's quarters, where he arranged with the grocer to take care of them for him. He had looked on enough at the sport to know the use of his tools; and choosing for his practice ground an almost treeless slope not far behind the sanatorium, remote from the hubbub of the spot where other beginners learned the art, he began daily to make his first blundering attempts, watched by Herr Settembrini, who would stand at a little distance, leaning on his cane, with legs gracefully crossed, and greet his nursling's progress with applause. One day Hans Castorp, steering down the cleared drive toward the Dorf, to take the skis back to the grocer's, ran into the Hofrat. Behrens never recognized him, though it was broad day, and our beginner had well-nigh collided with him. Shrouded in a haze of tobacco smoke, he stalked past regardless.

Hans Castorp found that one quickly gets readiness in an art where strong desire comes in play. He was not ambitious for expert skill, and all he needed he acquired in a few days, without undue strain on wind or muscles. He learned to keep his feet tidily together and make parallel tracks; to avail himself of his stick in getting off; he learned how to take obstacles, such as small elevations of the ground, with a slight soaring motion, arms outspread, rising and falling like a ship on a billowy sea; learned, after the twentieth trial, not to trip and roll

over when he braked at full speed, with the right Telemark turn, one leg forward, the other bent at the knee. Gradually he widened the sphere of his activities. One day it came to pass that Herr Settembrini saw him vanish in the far white mist; the Italian shouted a warning through cupped hands and turned homeward, his pedagogic soul well pleased.

It was beautiful here in these wintry heights: not mildly and ingratiatingly beautiful, more as the North Sea is beautiful in a westerly gale. There was no thunder of surf, a deathly stillness reigned, but roused similar feelings of awe. Hans Castorp's long, pliant soles carried him in all directions: along the left slope to Clavadel, on the right to Frauenkirch and Glaris, whence he could see the shadowy massif of the Amselfluh, ghostlike in the mist; into the Dischma valley, or up behind the Berghof in the direction of the wooded Seehorn, only the top of which, snow-covered, rose above the tree line, or the Drusatscha forest, with the pale outline of the Rhatikon looming behind it, smothered in snow. He took his skis and went up on the funicular to the Schatzalp; there, rapt six thousand feet above the sea, he reveled at will on the gleaming slopes of powdery snow—whence in good weather, there was a view of majestic extent over all the surrounding territory.

He rejoiced in his new resource, before which all difficulties and hindrances to movement fell away. It gave him the utter solitude he craved, and filled his soul with impressions of the wild inhumanity, the precariousness of this region into which he had ventured. On his one hand he might have a precipitous, pine-clad declivity, falling away into the mists, on the other sheer rock might rise, with masses of snow, in monstrous Cyclopean forms all domed and vaulted, swelling or cavernous. He would halt for a moment, to quench the sound of his own movement, when the silence about him would be absolute, complete, a wadded soundlessness, as it were, elsewhere all unknown. There was no stir of air, not so much as might even lightly sway the tree boughs, there was not a rustle, nor the voice of a bird. It was primeval silence to which Hans Castorp hearkened, when he leaned thus on his staff, his head on one side, his mouth open. And always it snowed, snowed without pause, endlessly, gently, soundlessly falling.

No, this world of limitless silences had nothing hospitable; it received the visitor at his own risk, or rather it scarcely even received him, it tolerated his penetration into its fastnesses, in a manner that boded no good; it made him aware of the menace of the elemental, a

menace not even hostile, but impersonally deadly. The child of civilization, remote from birth from wild nature and all her ways, is more susceptible to her grandeur than is her untutored son who has looked at her and lived close to her from childhood up, on terms of prosaic familiarity. The latter scarcely knows the religious awe with which the other regards her, that awe which conditions all his feeling for her, and is present, a constant, solemn thrill, in the profoundest depth of his soul. Hans Castorp, standing there in his puttees and long-sleeved camel's-hair waistcoat, on his skis *de luxe*, suddenly seemed to himself exceedingly presumptuous, to be thus listening to the primeval hush, the deathlike silence of these wintry fastnesses. He felt his breast lightened when, on his way home, the first chalets, the first abodes of human beings, loomed visible through the fog. Only then did he become aware that he had been for hours possessed by a secret awe and terror. On the island of Sylt he had stood by the edge of the thundering surf. In his white flannels, elegant, self-assured, but most respectful, he had stood there as one stands before a lion's cage and looks deep into the yawning maw of the beast lined with murderous fangs. He had bathed in the surf, and needed the blast of the coast guard's horn, warning all and sundry not to venture rashly beyond the first line of billows, not to approach too nearly the oncoming tempest—the very last impulse of whose cataract, indeed, struck upon him like a blow from a lion's paw. From that experience our young man had learned the fearful pleasure of toying with forces so great that to approach them nearly is destruction. What he had not then felt was the temptation to come closer, to carry the thrilling contact with these deadly natural forces up to a point where the full embrace was imminent. Weak human being that he was—though tolerably well equipped with the weapons of civilization—what he at this moment knew was the fascination of venturing just so far into the monstrous unknown, or at least abstaining just so long from flight before it, that the adventure grazed the perilous, that it was just barely possible to put limits to it, before it became no longer a matter of toying with the foam and playfully dodging the ruthless paw—but the ultimate adventure, the billow, the lion's maw and the sea.

In a word, Hans Castorp was valorous up here—if by valor we mean not mere dull matter-of-factness in the face of nature but conscious submission to her, the fear of death cast out by irresistible oneness. Yes, in his narrow, hypercivilized breast, Hans Castorp cherished a feeling of kinship with the elements, connected with the new sense of superiority he had lately felt at sight of the silly people

on their little sleds; it had made him feel that a profounder, more spacious, less luxuriant solitude than that afforded by his balcony chair would be beyond all price. He had sat there and looked abroad, at those mist-wreathed summits, at the carnival of snow, and blushed to be gaping thus from the breastwork of material well-being. This motive, and no momentary fad—no, nor yet any native love of bodily exertion—was what impelled him to learn the use of skis. If it was uncanny up there in the magnificence of the mountains, in the deathly silence of the snows—and uncanny it assuredly was, to our son of civilization—this was equally true, that in these months and years he had already drunk deep of the uncanny, in spirit and in sense. Even a colloquy with Naphta and Settembrini was not precisely the canniest thing in the world, it too led one on into uncharted and perilous regions. So if we can speak of Hans Castorp's feeling of kinship with the wild powers of the winter heights, it is in this sense, that despite his pious awe he felt these scenes to be a fitting theater for the issue of his involved thoughts, a fitting stage for one to make who, scarcely knowing how, found it had devolved upon him to take stock of himself, in reference to the rank and status of the *Homo Dei*.

No one was here to blow a warning to the rash one—unless, indeed, Herr Settembrini, with his farewell shout at Hans Castorp's disappearing back, had been that man. But possessed by valorous desire, our youth had given the call no heed—as little as he had the steps behind him on a certain carnival night. "*Eh, Ingegnere, un po' di ragione, sa!*" "Yes, yes, pedagogic Satana, with your *ragione* and your *ribellione*," he thought. "But I'm rather fond of you. You are a windbag and a hand-organ man, to be sure. But you mean well, you mean much better, and more to my mind, than that knife-edged little Jesuit and Terrorist, apologist of the Inquisition and the knout, with his round eyeglasses—though he is nearly always right when you and he come to grips over my paltry soul, like God and the Devil in the medieval legends."

He struggled, one day, powdered in snow to the waist, up a succession of snow-shrouded terraces, up and up, he knew not whither. No-whither, perhaps; these upper regions blended with a sky no less misty-white than they, and where the two came together it was hard to tell. No summit, no ridge was visible, it was a haze and a nothing, toward which Hans Castorp strove; while behind him the world, the inhabited valley, fell away swiftly from view, and no sound mounted to his ears. In a twinkling he was as solitary, he was as lost, as heart could wish, his loneliness was profound enough to awake the fear

which is the first stage of valor. "*Praeterit figura huius mundi*," he said to himself, quoting Naphta, in a Latin hardly humanistic in spirit. He stopped and looked about. On all sides there was nothing to see, beyond small single flakes of snow, which came out of a white sky and sank to rest on the white earth. The silence about him refused to say aught to his spirit. His gaze was lost in the blind white void, he felt his heart pulse from the effort of the climb—that muscular organ whose animal-like shape and contracting motion he had watched, with a feeling of sacrilege, in the X-ray laboratory. A naïve reverence filled him for that organ of his, for the pulsating human heart, up here alone in the icy void, alone with its question and its riddle.

On he pressed; higher and higher toward the sky. Walking, he thrust the end of his stick in the snow and watched the blue light follow it out of the hole it made. That he liked; and stood for long at a time to test the little optical phenomenon. It was a strange, a subtle color, this greenish blue; color of the heights and deeps, ice-clear, yet holding shadow in its depths, mysteriously exquisite. It reminded him of the color of certain eyes, whose shape and glance had spelled his destiny; eyes to which Herr Settembrini, from his humanistic height, had referred with contempt as "Tartar slits" and "wolf's eyes"—eyes seen long ago and then found again, the eyes of Pribislav Hippe and Clavdia Chauchat. "With pleasure," he said aloud, in the profound stillness. "But don't break it—*c'est à visser, tu sais*." And his spirit heard behind him words of warning in a mellifluous tongue.

A wood loomed, misty, far off to the right. He turned that way, to the end of having some goal before his eyes, instead of sheer white transcendence; and made toward it with a dash, not remarking an intervening depression of the ground. He could not have seen it, in fact, everything swam before his eyes in the white mist, obliterating all contours. When he perceived it, he gave himself to the decline, unable to measure its steepness with his eye.

The grove that had attracted him lay the other side of the gully into which he had unintentionally steered. The trough, covered with fluffy snow, fell away on the side next the mountains, as he observed when he pursued it a little distance. It went downhill, the steep sides grew higher, this fold of the earth's surface seemed like a narrow passage leading into the mountain. Then the points of his skis turned up again, there began an incline, soon there were no more side walls. Hans Castorp's trackless course ran once more uphill along the mountainside.

He saw the pine grove behind and below him, on his right, turned



again toward it, and with a quick descent reached the laden trees; they stood in a wedge-shaped group, a vanguard thrust out from the mist-screened forests above. He rested beneath their boughs and smoked a cigarette. The unnatural stillness, the monstrous solitude, still oppressed his spirit, yet he felt proud to have conquered them, brave in the pride of having measured to the height of surroundings such as these.

It was three in the afternoon. He had set out soon after luncheon, with the idea of cutting part of the long rest cure, and tea as well in order to be back before dark. He had brought some chocolate in his breeches pocket and a small flask of wine, and told himself exultantly that he had still several hours to revel in all this grandeur.

The position of the sun was hard to recognize, veiled as it was in haze. Behind him, at the mouth of the valley, above that part of the mountains that was shut off from view, the clouds and mist seemed to thicken and move forward. They looked like snow—more snow—is though there were pressing demand for it! Like a good hard storm. Indeed the little soundless flakes were coming down more quickly as he stood.

Hans Castorp put out his arm and let some of them come to rest on his sleeve. He viewed them with the knowing eye of the nature lover. They looked mere shapeless morsels, but he had more than once had their like under his good lens and was aware of the exquisite precision of form displayed by these little jewels, insignias, orders, agraffes—no jeweler, however skilled, could do finer, more minute work. Yes, he thought there was a difference, after all, between this light soft white powder he trod with his skis that weighed down the trees and covered the open spaces, a difference between it and the sand on the beaches at home to which he had likened it. For this powder was not made of tiny grains of stone but of myriads of finest drops of water which in freezing had darted together in symmetrical variation—parts, then, of the same inorganic substance which was the source of protoplasm of plant life, of the human body. And among these myriads of enchanting little stars, in their hidden splendor that was too small for man's naked eye to see, there was not one like unto another, in endless inventiveness governed the development and unthinkable differentiation of one and the same basic scheme, the equilateral equiangular hexagon. Yet each, in itself—this was the uncanny, the antiorganic, the life-denying character of them all—each of them was absolutely symmetrical, icily regular in form. They were too regular, as substance adapted to life never was to

this degree—the living principle shuddered at this perfect precision, found it deathly, the very marrow of death—Hans Castorp felt he understood now the reason why the builders of antiquity purposely and secretly introduced minute variation from absolute symmetry in their columnar structures.

He pushed off again, shuffling through the deep snow on his flexible runners, along the edge of the wood, down the slope, up again, at random, to his heart's content, about and into this lifeless land. Its empty, rolling spaces, its dried vegetation of single dwarf firs sticking up through the snow, bore a striking resemblance to a scene on the dunes. Hans Castorp nodded as he stood and fixed the likeness in his mind. Even his burning face, his trembling limbs, the peculiar and half-intoxicated mingled sensations of excitement and fatigue were pleasurable, reminding him as they did of that familiar feeling induced by the sea air, which could sting one like whips, and yet was so laden with sleepy essences. He rejoiced in his freedom of motion, his feet were like wings. He was bound to no path, none lay behind him to take him back whence he had come. At first there had been posts, staves set up as guides through the snow—but he had soon cut free from their tutelage, which recalled the coast guard with his horn, and seemed inconsistent with the attitude he had taken up toward the wild.

He pressed on, turning right and left among rocky snow-clad elevations, and came behind them on an incline, then a level spot, then on the mountains themselves—how alluring and accessible seemed their softly covered gorges and defiles! His blood leaped at the strong allurements of the distance and the height, the ever profounder solitude. At risk of a late return he pressed on, deeper into the wild silence, the monstrous and the menacing, despite that gathering darkness was sinking down over the region like a veil, and heightening his inner apprehension until it presently passed into actual fear. It was this fear which first made him conscious that he had deliberately set out to lose his way and the direction in which valley and settlement lay—and had been as successful as heart could wish. Yet he knew that if he were to turn in his tracks and go downhill, he would reach the valley bottom—even if at some distance from the Berghof—and that sooner than he had planned. He would come home too early, not have made full use of his time. On the other hand, if he were overtaken unawares by the storm, he would probably in any case not find his way home. But however genuine his fear of the elements, he refused to take premature flight; his being scarcely the sportsman's atti-

tude, who only meddles with the elements so long as he knows himself their master, takes all precautions, and prudently yields when he must—whereas what went on in Hans Castorp's soul can only be described by the one word challenge. It was perhaps a blameworthy, presumptuous attitude, even united to such genuine awe. Yet this much is clear, to any human understanding: that when a young man has lived years long in the way this one had, something may gather—may accumulate, as our engineer might put it—in the depths of his soul, until one day it suddenly discharges itself, with a primitive exclamation of disgust, a mental "Oh, go to the devil!" a repudiation of all caution whatsoever, in short with a challenge. So on he went, in his seven-league slippers, glided down this slope too and pressed up the incline beyond, where stood a wooden hut that might be a hayrick or shepherd's shelter, its roof weighted with flat stones. On past this to the nearest mountain ridge, bristling with forest, behind whose back the giant peaks towered upward in the mist. The wall before him, studded with single groups of trees, was steep, but looked as though one might wind to the right and get round it by climbing a little way up the slope. Once on the other side, he could see what lay beyond. Accordingly Hans Castorp set out on this tour of investigation, which began by descending from the meadow with the hut into another and rather deep gully that dropped off from right to left.

He had just begun to mount again when the expected happened, and the storm burst, the storm that had threatened so long. Or may one say "threatened" of the action of blind, nonsentient forces, which have no purpose to destroy us—that would be comforting by comparison—but are merely horribly indifferent to our fate should we become involved with them? "Hullo!" Hans Castorp thought, and stood still, as the first blast whirled through the densely falling snow and caught him. "That's a gentle zephyr—tells you what's coming." And truly this wind was savage. The air was in reality frightfully cold, probably some degrees below zero; but so long as it remained dry and still one almost found it balmy. It was when a wind came up that the cold began to cut into the flesh; and in a wind like the one that blew now, of which that first gust had been a forerunner, the furs were not bought that could protect the limbs from its icy rigors. And Hans Castorp wore no fur, only a woollen waistcoat, which he had found quite enough, or even, with the faintest gleam of sunshine, a burden. But the wind was at his back, a little sidewise; there was small inducement to turn and receive it in the face; so the mad youth, letting that fact reinforce the fundamental challenge of his attitude,

pressed on among the single tree trunks, and tried to outflank the mountain he had attacked.

It was no joke. There was almost nothing to be seen for swimming snowflakes, that seemed without falling to fill the air to suffocation by their whirling dance. The icy gusts made his ears burn painfully, his limbs felt half paralyzed, his hands were so numb he hardly knew if they held the staff. The snow blew inside his collar and melted down his back. It drifted on his shoulders and right side; he thought he should freeze as he stood into a snow man, with his staff stiff in his hands. And all this under relatively favoring circumstances; for let him turn his face to the storm and his situation would be still worse. Getting home would be no easy task—the harder, the longer he put it off.

At last he stopped, gave an angry shrug, and turned his skis the other way. Then the wind he faced took his breath on the spot, so that he was forced to go through the awkward process of turning round again to get it back, and collect his resolution to advance in the teeth of his ruthless foe. With bent head and cautious breathing he managed to get under way; but even thus forewarned, the slowness of his progress and the difficulty of seeing and breathing dismayed him. Every few minutes he had to stop, first to get his breath in the lee of the wind, and then because he saw next to nothing in the blinding whiteness, and moving as he did with head down, had to take care not to run against trees, or be flung headlong by unevenness in the ground. Hosts of flakes flew into his face, melted there, and he anguished with the cold of them. They flew into his mouth, and died away with a weak, watery taste; flew against his eyelids so that he winked, overflowed his eyes and made seeing as difficult as it was now almost impossible for other reasons: namely, the dazzling effect of all that whiteness, and the veiling of his field of vision, so that his sense of sight was almost put out of action. It was nothingness, white, whirling nothingness, into which he looked when he forced himself to do so. Only at intervals did ghostly-seeming forms from the world of reality loom up before him: a stunted fir, a group of pines, even the pale silhouette of the hay hut he had lately passed.

He left it behind, and sought his way back over the slope on which it stood. But there was no path. To keep direction, relatively speaking, into his own valley would be a question far more of luck than management; for while he could see his hand before his face, he could not see the ends of his skis. And even with better visibility, the host of difficulties must have combined to hinder his progress: the

snow in his face, his adversary the storm, which hampered his breathing, made him fight both to take a breath and to exhale it, and constantly forced him to turn his head away to gasp. How could anyone—either Hans Castorp or another and much stronger than he—make head? He stopped, he blinked his lashes free of water drops, knocked off the snow that like a coat of mail was sheathing his body in front—and it struck him that progress, under the circumstances, was more than anyone could expect.

And yet Hans Castorp did progress. That is to say, he moved on. But whether in the right direction, whether it might not have been better to stand still, remained to be seen. Theoretically the chances were against it; and in practice he soon began to suspect something was wrong. This was not familiar ground beneath his feet, not the easy slope he had gained on mounting with such difficulty from the ravine, which had of course to be retraversed. The level distance was too short, he was already mounting again. It was plain that the storm, which came from the southwest, from the mouth of the valley, had with its violence driven him from his course. He had been exhausting himself, all this time, with a false start. Blindly, enveloped in white, whirling night, he labored deeper and deeper into this grim and callous sphere.

"No, you don't," said he, suddenly, between his teeth, and halted. The words were not emotional, yet he felt for a second as though his heart had been clutched by an icy hand; it winced, and then knocked rapidly against his ribs, as it had the time Rhadamanthus found the moist cavity. Pathos in the grand manner was not in place, he knew, in one who had chosen defiance as his role; and was indebted to himself alone for his present plight. "Not bad," he said, and discovered that his facial muscles were not his to command, that he could not express in his face any of his soul's emotions, for that it was stiff with cold. "What next? Down this slope, follow your nose home, I suppose, and keep your face to the wind—though that is a good deal easier said than done," he went on, panting with his efforts, yet actually speaking half aloud, as he tried to move on again: "but something has to happen, I can't sit down and wait, I should simply be buried in six-sided crystalline symmetry, and Settembrini, when he came with his little horn to find me, would see me squatting here with a snow cap over one ear." He realized that he was talking to himself, and not too sensibly—for which he took himself to task, and then continued on purpose, though his lips were so stiff he could not shape the labials, and so did without them, as he had on a certain

other occasion that came to his mind. "Keep quiet, and get along with you out of here," he admonished himself, adding: "You seem to be wool-gathering, not quite right in your head, and that looks bad for you."

But this he only said with his reason—to some extent detached from the rest of him, though after all nearly concerned. As for his natural part, it felt only too much inclined to yield to the confusion which laid hold upon him with his growing fatigue. He even remarked this tendency and took thought to comment upon it. "Here," said he, "we have the typical reaction of a man who loses himself in the mountains in a snowstorm and never finds his way home." He gasped out other fragments of the same thought as he went, though he avoided giving it more specific expression. "Whoever hears about it afterward imagines it as horrible; but he forgets that disease—and the state I am in is, in a way of speaking, disease—so adjusts its man that it and he can come to terms; there are sensory appeasements, short circuits, a merciful narcosis—yes, oh yes, yes. But one must fight against them, after all, for they are two-faced, they are in the highest degree equivocal, everything depends upon the point of view. If you are not meant to get home, they are a benefaction, they are merciful; but if you mean to get home, they become sinister. I believe I still do. Certainly I don't intend—in this heart of mine so stormily beating it doesn't appeal to me in the least—to let myself be snowed under by this idiotically symmetrical crystallometry."

In truth, he was already affected, and his struggle against oncoming sensory confusion was feverish and abnormal. He should have been more alarmed on discovering that he had already declined from the level course—this time apparently on the other slope. For he had pushed off with the wind coming slantwise at him, which was ill-advised, though more convenient for the moment. "Never mind," he thought, "I'll get my direction again down below." Which he did or thought he did—or, truth to tell, scarcely even thought so; worst of all, began to be indifferent whether he had done or no. Such was the effect of an insidious double attack, which he but weakly combated. Fatigue and excitement combined were a familiar state to our young man—whose acclimatization, as we know, still consisted in getting used to not getting used; and both fatigue and excitement were now present in such strength as to make impossible any thought of asserting his reason against them. He felt as often after a colloquy with Settembrini and Naphta, only to a far greater degree: dazed and tipsy, giddy, atremble with excitement. This was probably why he be-

gan to color his lack of resistance to the stealing narcosis with half-maudlin references to the latest-airod complex of theories. Despite his scornful repudiation of the idea that he might lie down and be covered up with hexagonal symmetricality, something within him maundered on, sense or no sense: told him that the feeling of duty which bade him fight against insidious sensory appeasements was a purely ethical reaction, representing the sordid bourgeois view of life, irreligion, Philistinism; while the desire, nay, craving, to lie down and rest, whispered him in the guise of a comparison between this storm and a sandstorm on the desert, before which the Arab flings himself down and draws his burnous over his head. Only his lack of a burnous, the unfeasibility of drawing his woolen waistcoat over his head, prevented him from following suit—this although he was no longer a child, and pretty well aware of the conditions under which a man freezes to death.

There had been a rather steep declivity, then level ground, then again an ascent, a stiff one. This was not necessarily wrong; one must of course, on the way to the valley, traverse rising ground at times. The wind had turned capriciously round, for it was now at Hans Castorp's back, and that, taken by itself, was a blessing. Owing, perhaps, to the storm, or the soft whiteness of the incline before him, dim in the whirling air, drawing him toward it, he bent as he walked. Only a little farther—supposing one were to give way to the temptation, and his temptation was great; it was so strong that it quite lived up to the many descriptions he had read of the "typical danger state." It asserted itself, it refused to be classified with the general order of things, it insisted on being an exception, its very exigence challenged comparison—yet at the same time it never disguised its origin or aura, never denied that it was, so to speak, garbed in Spanish black, with snow-white, fluted ruff, and stood for ideas and fundamental conceptions that were characteristically gloomy, strongly Jesuitical and anti-human, for the rack-and-knout discipline which was the particular horror of Herr Settembrini, though he never opposed it without making himself ridiculous, like a hand-organ man forever grinding out "*ragione*" to the same old tune.

And yet Hans Castorp did hold himself upright and resist his craving to lie down. He could see nothing but he struggled, he came forward. Whether to the purpose or not, he could not tell; but he did his part, and moved on despite the weight the cold more and more laid upon his limbs. The present slope was too steep to ascend directly, so he slanted a little, and went on thus awhile without much heed

whither. Even to lift his stiffened lids to peer before him was so great and so nearly useless an effort as to offer him small incentive. He merely caught glimpses: here clumps of pines that merged together; there a ditch or stream, a black line marked out between overhanging banks of snow. Now, for a change, he was going downhill, with the wind in his face, when, at some distance before him, and seeming to hang in the driving wind and mist, he saw the faint outline of a human habitation.

Ah, sweet and blessed sight! Verily he had done well, to march stoutly on despite all obstacles, until now human dwellings appeared, in sign that the inhabited valley was at hand. Perhaps there were even human beings, perhaps he might enter and abide the end of the storm under shelter, then get directions, or a guide if the dark should have fallen. He held toward this chimerical goal, that often quite vanished in mist, and took an exhausting climb against the wind before it was reached; finally drew near it—to discover, with what staggering astonishment and horror may be imagined, that it was only the hay hut with the weighted roof, to which, after a'l his striving, by all his devious paths, he had come back.

That was the very devil. Hans Castorp gave vent to several heartfelt curses—of which his lips were too stiff to pronounce the labials. He examined the hut, to get his bearings, and came to the conclusion that he had approached it from the same direction as before—namely, from the rear; and therefore, what he had accomplished for the past hour—as he reckoned it—had been sheer waste of time and effort. But there it was, just as the books said. You went in a circle, gave yourself endless trouble under the delusion that you were accomplishing something, and all the time you were simply describing some great silly arc that would turn back to where it had its beginning, like the riddling year itself. You wandered about, without getting home. Hans Castorp recognized the traditional phenomenon with a certain grim satisfaction—and even slapped his thigh in astonishment at this punctual general law fulfilling itself in his particular case.

The lonely hut was barred, the door locked fast, no entrance possible. But Hans Castorp decided to stop for the present. The projecting roof gave the illusion of shelter, and the hut itself, on the side turned toward the mountains, afforded, he found, some little protection against the storm. He leaned his shoulder against the rough-hewn timber, since his long skis prevented him from leaning his back. And so he stood, obliquely to the wall, having thrust his staff in the snow;



hands in pockets, his collar turned up as high as it would go, bracing himself on his outside leg, and leaning his dizzy head against the wood, his eyes closed, but opening them every now and then to look down his shoulder and across the gully to where the high mountain wall palely appeared and disappeared in mist.

His situation was comparatively comfortable. "I can stick it like this all night, if I have to," he thought, "if I change legs from time to time, lie on the other side, so to speak, and move about a bit between whiles, as of course I must. I'm rather stiff, naturally, but the effort I made has accumulated some inner warmth, so after all it was not quite in vain, that I have come round all this way. Come round—not coming round—that's the regular expression they use, of people drowned or frozen to death.—I suppose I used it because I am not quite so clear in the head as I might be. But it is a good thing I can stick it out here, for this frantic nuisance of a snowstorm can carry on until morning without a qualm, and if it only keeps up until dark it will be quite bad enough, for in the dark the danger of going round and round and *not* coming round is as great as in a storm. It must be toward evening already, about six o'clock, I should say, after all the time I wasted on my circular tour. Let's see, how late is it?" He felt for his watch, his numbed fingers could scarcely find and draw it from his pocket. Here it was, his gold hunting watch, with his monogram on the lid, ticking faithfully away in this lonely waste, like Hans Castorp's own heart, that touching human heart that beat in the organic warmth of his interior man.

It was half past four. But deuce take it, it had been nearly so much before the storm burst. Was it possible his whole bewildered circuit had lasted scarcely a quarter of an hour? "‘Coming round’ makes time seem long," he noted. "And when you *don't* ‘come round’—does it seem longer?" But the fact remains that at five or half past it will be regularly dark. Will the storm hold up in time to keep me from running in circles again? Suppose I take a sip of port—it might strengthen me."

He had brought with him a bottle of that amateurish drink, simply because it was always kept ready in flat bottles at the Berghof, for excursions—though not, of course, excursions like this unlawful escapade. It was not meant for people who went out in the snow and got lost and fight-bound in the mountains. Had his senses been less befogged, he must have said to himself that if he were bent on getting home, it was almost the worst thing he could have done. He did say so, after he had drunk several swallows, for they took effect at once,

and it was an effect much like that of the Kulmbacher beer on the evening of his arrival at the Berghof, when he had angered Settembrini by his ungoverned prattle anent fish sauces and the like—Herr Ludovico, the pedagogue, the same who held madmen to their senses when they would give themselves rein. Hans Castorp heard through thin air the mellifluous sound of his horn; the orator and schoolmaster was nearing by forced marches, to rescue his troublesome nursling, life's delicate child, from his present desperate pass and lead him home.—All which was of course sheer rubbish, due to the Kulmbacher he had so foolishly drunk. For of course Herr Settembrini had no horn, how could he have? He had a hand organ, propped by a sort of wooden leg against the pavement, and as he played a sprightly air, he flung his humanistic eyes up to the people in the houses. And furthermore he knew nothing whatever of what had happened, as he no longer lived in House Berghof, but with Lukaček the tailor, in his little attic room with the water bottle, above Naphta's silken cell. Moreover, he would have no right nor reason to interfere—no more than upon that carnival night on which Hans Castorp had found himself in a position quite as mad and bad as this one, when he gave the ailing Clavdia Chauchat back *son crayon*—his, Pribislav Hippe's, pencil. What position was that? What position could it be but the horizontal, literally and not metaphorically the position of all long-termers up here? Was he himself not used to lie long hours out of doors, in snow and frost, by night as well as day? And he was making ready to sink down when the idea seized him, took him as it were by the collar and fetched him up standing, that all this nonsense he was uttering was still inspired by the Kulmbacher beer and the impersonal, quite typical and traditional longing to lie down and sleep, of which he had always heard, and which would by quibbling and sophistry now betray him.

"That was the wrong way to go to work," he acknowledged to himself. "The port was not at all the right thing; just the few sips of it have made my head so heavy I cannot hold it up, and my thoughts are all just confused, stupid quibbling with words. I can't depend on them—not only the first thought that comes into my head, but even the second one, the correction which my reason tries to make upon the first—more's the pity. '*Son crayon!*' That means her pencil, not his pencil, in this case; you only say *son* because *crayon* is masculine. The rest is just a pretty feeble play on words. Imagine stopping to talk about that when there is a much more important fact; namely, that my left leg, which I am using as a support, reminds me of the

wooden leg on Settembrini's hand organ, that he keeps jolting over the pavement with his knee, to get up close to the window and hold out his velvet hat for the girl up there to throw something into. And at the same time, I seem to be pulled, as though with hands, to lie down in the snow. The only thing to do is to move about. I must pay for the Kulmbacher, and limber up my wooden leg."

He pushed himself away from the wall with his shoulder. But one single pace forward, and the wind sliced at him like a scythe, and drove him back to the shelter of the wall. It was unquestionably the position indicated for the time; he might change it by turning his left shoulder to the wall and propping himself on the right leg, with sundry shakings of the left, to restore the circulation as much as might be. "Who leaves the house in weather like this?" he said. "Moderate activity is all right; but not too much craving for adventure, no coying with the bride of the storm. Quiet, quiet—if the head be heavy, let it droop. The wall is good, a certain warmth seems to come from the logs—probably the feeling is entirely subjective.—Ah, the trees, the trees! Oh, living climate of the living—how sweet it smells!"

It was a park. It lay beneath the terrace on which he seemed to stand—a spreading park of luxuriant green shade trees, elms, planes, beeches, oaks, birches, all in the dappled light and shade of their fresh, full, shimmering foliage, and gently rustling tips. They breathed a deliciously moist, balsamic breath into the air. A warm shower passed over them, but the rain was sunlit. One could see high up in the sky the whole air filled with the bright ripple of raindrops. How lovely it was! Oh, breath of the homeland, oh, fragrance and abundance of the plain, so long foregone! The air was full of bird song—dainty, sweet, blithe fluting, piping, twittering, cooing, trilling, warbling, though not a single little creature could be seen. Hans Castorp smiled, breathing gratitude. But still more beauties were preparing. A rainbow, flung its arc slanting across the scene, most bright and perfect, a sheer delight, all its rich glossy, banded colors moistly shimmering down into the thick, lustrous green. It was like music, like the sound of harps commingled with flutes and violins. The blue and the violet were transcendent. And they descended and magically blended, were transmuted and refolded more lovely than at first. Once, some years before, our young Hans Castorp had been privileged to hear a world-famous Italian tenor, from whose throat had gushed a glorious stream to witch the world with gracious art. The singer took a high note, exquisitely; then held it, while the passionate harmony swelled, unfolded, glowed from moment to moment with new radi-

ance. Unsuspected veils dropped from before it one by one; the last one sank away, revealing what must surely be the ultimate tonal purity—yet no, for still another fell, and then a well-nigh incredible third and last, shaking into the air such an extravagance of tear-glittering splendor, that confused murmurs of protest rose from the audience, as though it could bear no more; and our young friend found that he was sobbing.—So now with the scene before him, constantly transformed and transfigured as it was before his eyes. The bright, rainy veil fell away; behind it stretched the sea, a southern sea of deep, deepest blue shot with silver lights, and a beautiful bay, on one side mistily open, on the other enclosed by mountains whose outline paled away into blue space. In the middle distance lay islands, where palms rose tall and small white houses gleamed among cypress groves. Ah, it was all too much, too blest for sinful mortals, that glory of light, that deep purity of the sky, that sunny freshness on the water! Such a scene Hans Castorp had never beheld, nor anything like it. On his holidays he had barely sipped at the south, the sea for him meant the colorless, tempestuous northern tides, to which he clung with inarticulate, childish love. Of the Mediterranean, Naples, Sicily, he knew nothing. And yet—he *remembered*. Yes, strangely enough, that was recognition which so moved him “Yes, yes, its very image,” he was crying out, as though in his heart he had always cherished a picture of this spacious, sunny bliss. Always—and that always went far, far, unthinkably far back, as far as the open sea there on the left where it ran out to the violet sky bent down to meet it.

The skyline was high, the distance seemed to mount to Hans Castorp's view, looking down as he did from his elevation on the spreading gulf beneath. The mountains held it embraced, their tree-clad foothills running down to the sea; they reached in half-circle from the middle distance to the point where he sat, and beyond. This was a mountainous littoral, at one point of which he was crouching upon a sun-warmed stone terrace, while before him the ground, descending among undergrowth, by moss-covered rocky steps, ran down to a level shore, where the reedy shingle formed little blue-dyed bays, minute archipelagoes and harbors. And all the sunny region, these open coastal heights and laughing rocky basins, even the sea itself out to the islands, where boats plied to and fro, was peopled far and wide. On every hand human beings, children of sun and sea, were stirring or sitting. Beautiful young human creatures, so blithe, so good and gay, so pleasing to see—at sight of them Hans Castorp's whole heart opened in a responsive love, keen almost to pain.

Youths were at work with horses, running hand on halter alongside their whinnying, head-tossing charges; pulling the refractory ones on a long rein, or else, seated bareback, striking the flanks of their mounts with naked heels, to drive them into the sea. The muscles of the riders' backs played beneath the sun-bronzed skin, and their voices were enchanting beyond words as they shouted to each other or to their animals. A little bay ran deep into the coast line, mirroring the shore as does a mountain lake; about it girls were dancing. One of them sat with her back toward him, so that her neck, and the hair drawn to a knot above it, smote him with loveliness. She sat with her feet in a depression of the rock, and played on a shepherd's pipe, her eyes roving above the stops to her companions, as in long, wide garments, smiling, with outstretched arms, alone, or in pairs swaying gently toward each other, they moved in the paces of the dance. Behind the flute player—she too was white-clad, and her back was long and slender, laterally rounded by the movement of her arms—other maidens were sitting, or standing entwined to watch the dance, and quietly talking. Beyond them still, young men were practicing archery. Lovely and pleasant it was to see the older ones show the younger, curly-locked novices, how to span the bow and take aim; draw with them and, laughing, support them staggering back from the push of the arrow as it leaped from the bow. Others were fishing, lying prone on a jut of rock, wagging one leg in the air, holding the line out over the water, approaching their heads in talk. Others sat straining forward to fling the bait far out. A ship, with mast and yards, lying high out of the tide, was being eased, shoved, and steadied into the sea. Children played and exulted among the breaking waves. A young female, lying outstretched, drawing with one hand her flowered robe high between her breasts, reached with the other in the air after a twig bearing fruit and leaves, which a second, a slender-hipped creature, erect at her head, was playfully withholding. Young folk were sitting in nooks of the rocks, or hesitating at the water's edge, with crossed arms clutching either shoulder, as they tested the chill with their toes. Pairs strolled along the beach, close and confiding, at the maiden's ear the lips of the youth. Shaggy-haired goats leaped from ledge to ledge of the rocks, while the young goatherd, wearing perched on his brown curls a little hat with the brim turned up behind, stood watching them from a height, one hand on his hip, the other holding the long staff on which he leaned.

"Oh, lovely, lovely," Hans Castorp breathed. "How joyous and winning they are, how fresh and healthy, happy and clever they look!

It is not alone the outward form, they seem to be wise and gentle through and through. That is what makes me in love with them, the spirit that speaks out of them, the sense, I might almost say, in which they live and play together." By which he meant the friendliness, the mutual courteous regard these children of the sun showed to each other, a calm, reciprocal reverence veiled in smiles, manifested almost imperceptibly, and yet possessing them all by the power of sense association and ingrained idea. A dignity, even a gravity, was held, as it were, in solution in their lightest mood, perceptible only as an ineffable spiritual influence, a high seriousness without austerity, a reasoned goodness conditioning every act. All this, indeed, was not without its ceremonial side. A young mother, in a brown robe loose at the shoulder, sat on a rounded mossy stone and suckled her child, saluted by all who passed with a characteristic gesture which seemed to comprehend all that lay implicit in their general bearing. The young men, as they approached, lightly and formally crossed their arms on their breasts, and smilingly bowed; the maidens shaped the suggestion of a curtsy, as the worshiper does when he passes the high altar, at the same time nodding repeatedly, blithely and heartily. This mixture of formal homage with lively friendliness, and the slow, mild mien of the mother as well, where she sat pressing her breast with her forefinger to ease the flow of milk to her babe, glancing up from it to acknowledge with a smile the reverence paid her—this sight thrilled Hans Castorp's heart with something very close akin to ecstasy. He could not get his fill of looking, yet asked himself in concern whether he had a right, whether it was not perhaps punishable, for him, an outsider, to be a party to the sunshine and gracious loveliness of all these happy folk. He felt common, clumsy-booted. It seemed unscrupulous.

A lovely boy, with full hair drawn sideways across his brow and falling on his temples, sat directly beneath him, apart from his companions, with arms folded on his breast—not sadly, not ill-naturedly, quite tranquilly on one side. This lad looked up, turned his gaze upward and looked at him, Hans Castorp, and his eyes went between the watcher and the scenes upon the strand, watching his watching, to and fro. But suddenly he looked past Hans Castorp into space, and that smile, common to them all, of polite and brotherly regard, disappeared in a moment from his lovely, purely cut, half-childish face. His brows did not darken, but in his gaze there came a solemnity that looked as though carved out of stone, inexpressive, unfathomable, a deathlike reserve, which gave the scarcely reassured Hans Castorp a

thorough fright, not unaccompanied by a vague apprehension of its meaning

He too looked in the same direction. Behind him rose towering columns, built of cylindrical blocks without bases, in the joinings of which moss had grown. They formed the façade of a temple gate, on whose foundations he was sitting at the top of a double flight of steps with space between. Heavy of heart he rose, and, descending the stair on one side, passed through the high gate below, and along a flagged street, which soon brought him before other propylæa. He passed through these as well, and now stood facing the temple that lay before him, massy, weathered to a gray-green tone, on a foundation reached by a steep flight of steps. The broad brow of the temple rested on the capitals of powerful, almost stunted columns, tapering toward the top—sometimes a fluted block had been shoved out of line and projected a little in profile. Painfully, helping himself on with his hands and sighing for the growing oppression of his heart, Hans Castorp mounted the high steps and gained the grove of columns. It was very deep; he moved in it as among the trunks in a forest of beeches by the pale northern sea. He purposely avoided the center, yet for all that slanted back again and presently stood before a group of statuary: two female figures carved in stone on a high base, mother and daughter; it seemed one of them sitting, older than the other, more dignified, right goddesslike and mild, yet with mourning brows above the lightless empty eye sockets, clad in a flowing tunic and a mantle of many folds, her matronly brow with its waves of hair covered with dust. The other figure stood in the protecting embrace of the first, with round youthful face, and arms and hands wound and hidden in the folds of the mantle.

Hans Castorp stood looking at the group, and from some dark cause his laden heart grew heavier still and more oppressed with its weight of dread and anguish. Scarcely daring to venture but following an inner compulsion, he passed behind the statuary, and through the double row of columns beyond. The bronze door of the sanctuary stood open, and the poor soul's knees all but gave way beneath him at the sight within. Two gray old women, witchlike, with hanging breasts and dugos of finger length, were busy there, between flaming braziers, most horribly. They were dismembering a child. In dreadful silence they tore it apart with their bare hands—Hans Castorp saw the bright hair blood-smear'd—and cracked the tender bones between their jaws, their dreadful lips dripped blood. An icy coldness held him. He would have covered his eyes and fled, but could not. They

at their gory business had already seen him, they shook their reeking fists and uttered curses—soundlessly, most vilely, with the last obscenity, and in the dialect of Hans Castorp's native Hamburg. It made him sick, sick as never before. He tried desperately to escape; knocked into a column with his shoulder—and found himself, with the sound of that dreadful whispered brawling still in his ears, still wrapped in the cold horror of it, lying by his hut, in the snow, leaning against one arm, with his head upon it, his legs in their skis stretched out before him.

It was no true awakening. He blinked his relief at being free from those execrable hags, but was not very clear, nor even greatly concerned, whether this was a hay hut, or the column of a temple, against which he lay; and after a fashion continued to dream, no longer in pictures, but in thoughts hardly less involved and fantastic.

"I felt it was a dream, all along," he rambled. "A lovely and horrible dream. I knew all the time that I was making it myself—the park with the trees, the delicious moisture in the air, and all the rest, both dreadful and dear. In a way, I knew it all beforehand. But how is it a man can know all that and call it up to bring him bliss and terror both at once? Where did I get the beautiful bay with the islands, where the temple precincts, whither the eyes of that charming boy pointed me, as he stood there alone? Now I know that it is not out of our single souls we dream. We dream anonymously and communally, if each after his fashion. The great soul of which we are a part may dream through us, in our manner of dreaming, its own secret dreams, of its youth, its hope, its joy and peace—and its blood sacrifice. Here I lie at my column and still feel in my body the actual remnant of my dream—the icy horror of the human sacrifice, but also the joy that had filled my heart to its very depths, born of the happiness and brave bearing of those human creatures in white. It is meet and proper, I hereby declare that I have a prescriptive right to lie here and dream these dreams. For in my life up here I have known reason and recklessness. I have wandered lost with Settembrini and Naphta in high and mortal places. I know all of man. I have known mankind's flesh and blood. I gave back to the ailing Clavdia Chauchat Pribislav Hippe's lead pencil. But he who knows the body, life, knows death. And that is not all; it is, pedagogically speaking, only the beginning. One must have the other half of the story, the other side. For all interest in disease and death is only another expression of interest in life, as is proven by the humanistic faculty of medicine that addresses life and its ills always so politely in Latin, and is only a



division of the great and pressing concern which, in all sympathy, I now name by its name: the human being, the delicate child of life, man, his state and standing in the universe. I understand no little about him, I have learned much from 'those up here,' I have been driven up from the valley, so that the breath almost left my poor body. Yet now from the base of my column I have no meager view. I have dreamed of man's state, of his courteous and enlightened social state; behind which, in the temple, the horrible blood sacrifice was consummated. Were they, those children of the sun, so sweetly courteous to each other, in silent recognition of that horror? It would be a fine and right conclusion they drew. I will hold to them, in my soul, I will hold with them and not with Naphta, neither with Settembrini. They are both talkers; the one luxurious and spiteful, the other forever blowing on his penny pipe of reason, even vainly imagining he can bring the mad to their senses. It is all Philistinism and morality, most certainly it is irreligious. Nor am I for little Naphta either, or his religion, that is only a *guazzabuglio* of God and the Devil, good and evil, to the end that the individual soul shall plump into it head first, for the sake of mystic immersion in the universal. Pedagogues both! Their quarrels and counterpositions are just a *guazzabuglio* too, and a confused noise of battle, which need trouble nobody who keeps a little clear in his head and pious in his heart. Their aristocratic question! Disease, health! Spirit, nature! Are those contradictions? I ask, are they problems? No, they are no problems, neither is the problem of their aristocracy. The recklessness of death is, in life, it would not be life without it—and in the center is the position of the *Homo Dei*, between recklessness and reason, as his state is between mystic community and windy individualism. I, from my column, perceive all this. In this state he must live gallantly, associate in friendly reverence with himself, for only he is aristocratic, and the counterpositions are not at all. Man is the lord of counterpositions, they can be only through him, and thus he is more aristocratic than they. More so than death, too aristocratic for death—that is the freedom of his mind. More aristocratic than life, too aristocratic for life, and that is the piety in his heart. There is both rhyme and reason in what I say, I have made a dream poem of humanity. I will cling to it. I will be good. I will let death have no mastery over my thoughts. For therein lies goodness and love of humankind, and in nothing else. Death is a great power. One takes off one's hat before him, and goes weavily on tiptoe. He wears the stately ruff of the departed and we do him honor in solemn black. Reason stands simple before him, for reason

is only virtue, while death is release, immensity, abandon, desire. Desire, says my dream. Lust, not love. Death and love—no, I cannot make a poem of them, they don't go together. Love stands opposed to death. It is love, not reason, that is stronger than death. Only love, not reason, gives sweet thoughts. And from love and sweetness alone can form come: form and civilization, friendly, enlightened, beautiful human intercourse—always in silent recognition of the blood sacrifice. Ah, yes, it is well and truly dreamed. I have taken stock. I will remember. I will keep faith with death in my heart, yet well remember that faith with death and the dead is evil, is hostile to humankind, so soon as we give it power over thought and action. *For the sake of goodness and love, man shall let death have no sovereignty over his thoughts.*—And with this—I awake. For I have dreamed it out to the end, I have come to my goal. Long, long have I sought after this word, in the place where Hippe appeared to me, in my loggia, everywhere. Deep into the snow mountains my search has led me. Now I have it fast. My dream has given it me, in utter clearness, that I may know it for ever. Yes, I am in simple raptures, my body is warm, my heart beats high and knows why. It beats not solely on physical grounds, as fingernails grow on a corpse, but humanly, on grounds of my joyful spirits. My dream word was a draught, better than port or ale, it streams through my veins like love and life, I tear myself from my dream and sleep, knowing as I do perfectly well, that they are highly dangerous to my young life. Up, up! Open your eyes! These are your limbs, your legs here in the snow! Pull yourself together, and up! Look—fair weather!”

The bonds held fast that kept his limbs involved. He had a hard struggle to free himself—but the inner compulsion proved stronger. With a jerk he raised himself on his elbows, briskly drew up his knees, shoved, rolled, wrestled to his feet; stamped with his skis in the snow, flung his arms about his ribs and worked his shoulders violently, all the while casting strained, alert glances about him and above, where now a pale blue sky showed itself between gray-bluish clouds, and these presently drew away to discover a thin sickle of a moon. Early twilight reigned: no snowfall, no storm. The wall of the opposite mountain, with its shaggy, tree-clad ridge, stretched out before him, plain and peaceful. Shadow lay on half its height, but the upper half was bathed in palest rosy light. How were things in the world? Was it morning? Had he, despite what the books said, lain all night in the snow and not frozen? Not a member was frost-bitten, nothing snapped when he stamped, shook and struck himself, as he

did vigorously, all the time seeking to establish the facts of his situation. Ears, toes, finger tips, were of course numb, but not more so than they had often been at night in his loggia. He could take his watch from his pocket—it was still going, it had not stopped, as it did if he forgot to wind it. It said not yet five—was in fact considerably earlier, twelve, thirteen minutes. Preposterous! Could it be he had lain here in the snow only ten minutes or so, while all these scenes of horror and delight and those presumptuous thoughts had spun themselves in his brain, and the hexagonal hurly vanished as it came? If that were true, then he must be grateful for his good fortune, that is, from the point of view of a safe homecoming. For twice such a turn had come, in his dream and fantasy, as had made him start up—once from horror, and again for rapture. It seemed, indeed, that life meant well by her lone-wandering delicate child.

Be all that as it might, and whether it was morning or afternoon—there could in fact be no doubt that it was still late afternoon—in any case, there was nothing in the circumstances or in his own condition to prevent his going home, which he accordingly did, descending in a fine sweep, as the crow flies, to the valley, where, as he reached it, lights were showing, though his way had been well enough lighted by reflection from the snow. He came down the Brehmenbühl, along the edge of the forest, and was in the Dorf by half past five. He left his skis at the grocer's, rested a little in Herr Settembrini's attic cell, and told him how the storm had overtaken him in the mountains. The horrified humanist scolded him roundly, and straightway lighted his spirit kettle to brew coffee for the exhausted one—the strength of which did not prevent Hans Castorp from falling asleep as he sat.

An hour later the highly civilized atmosphere of the Berghof caressed him. He ate enormously at dinner. What he had dreamed was already fading from his mind. What he had thought—even that self-same evening it was no longer so clear as it had been at first.

# SO GOOD FOR THE BOYS

*from*

DECLINE AND FALL

*by* EVELYN WAUGH

*Of the many wonderful books Evelyn Waugh has produced over the last thirty years, Decline and Fall still stands in the opinion of many of his fans as his best. As the story begins, Paul Pennyfeather, its hero, in one of those mordantly ironic situations which Waugh creates so hilariously, is unjustly "sent down" from Oxford for indecent behavior. Disgraced, he has to take a teacher's position at Llanabba, a School. (In the interview with the scholastic agent, it is explained to Paul: "Between ourselves, Llanabba hasn't a good name in the profession. We class schools, you see, into four grades: Leading School, First-rate School, Good School, and School. Frankly, School is pretty bad. I think you'll find it a very suitable post. So far as I know, there are only two other candidates, and one of them is totally deaf, poor fellow.")*

**H**APPILY ENOUGH, it did not rain next day, and after morning school everybody dressed up to the nines. Dr. Fagan appeared in a pale gray morning coat and sponge-bag trousers, looking more than ever *jeune premier*; there was a spring in his step and a pronounced sprightliness of bearing that Paul had not observed before. Flossie wore a violet frock of knitted wool made for her during the preceding autumn by her sister. It was the color of indelible ink on

blotting paper, and was ornamented at the waist with flowers of emerald green and pink. Her hat, also homemade, was the outcome of many winter evenings of ungrudged labor. All the trimmings of all her previous hats had gone to its adornment. Dingy wore a little steel brooch made in the shape of a bulldog. Grimes wore a stiff evening collar of celluloid.

"Had to do something to celebrate the occasion," he said, "so I put on a 'choker.' Phew, though, it's tight. Have you seen my fiancée's latest creation? Ascot ain't in it. Let's get down to Mrs. Roberts for a quick one before the happy throng rolls up."

"I wish I could, but I've got to go round the ground with the Doctor."

"Righto, old boy! See you later. Here comes Prendy in his coat of many colors."

Mr. Prendergast wore a blazer of faded stripes, which smelled strongly of camphor.

"I think Dr. Fagan encourages a certain amount of display on these occasions," he said. "I used to keep wicket for my college, you know, but I was too shortsighted to be much good. Still, I am entitled to the blazer," he said with a note of defiance in his voice, "and it is more appropriate to a sporting occasion than a stiff collar."

"Good old Prendy!" said Grimes. "Nothing like a change of clothes to bring out latent pep. I felt like that my first week in khaki. Well, so long. Me for Mrs. Roberts. Why don't you come too, Prendy?"

"D'you know," said Mr. Prendergast, "I think I will."

Paul watched them disappear down the drive in amazement. Then he went off to find the Doctor.

"Frankly," said the Doctor, "I am at a loss to understand my own emotions. I can think of no entertainment that fills me with greater detestation than a display of competitive athletics, none—except possibly folk dancing. If there are two women in the world whose company I abominate—and there are very many more than two—they are Mrs. Beste-Chetwynde and Lady Circumference. I have, moreover, had an extremely difficult encounter with my butler, who—will you believe it?—waited at luncheon in a mustard-colored suit of plus fours and a diamond tie pin, and when I reprimanded him, attempted to tell me some ridiculous story about his being the proprietor of a circus or swimming bath or some such concern. And yet," said the Doctor, "I am filled with a wholly delightful exhilaration. I can't understand it. It is not as though this was the first occasion of the kind.

During the fourteen years that I have been at Llanabba there have been six sports days and two concerts, all of them, in one way or another, utterly disastrous. Once Lady Bunyan was taken ill; another time it was the matter of the press photographers and the obstacle race; another time some quite unimportant parents brought a dog with them which bit two of the boys very severely and one of the masters, who swore terribly in front of everyone. I could hardly blame him, but of course he had to go. Then there was the concert when the boys refused to sing 'God Save the King' because of the pudding they had had for luncheon. One way and another, I have been consistently unfortunate in my efforts at festivity. And yet I look forward to each new fiasco with the utmost relish. Perhaps, Pennyfeather, you will bring luck to Llanabba; in fact, I feel confident you have already done so. Look at the sun!"

Picking their way carefully among the dry patches in the waterlogged drive, they reached the playing fields. Here the haphazard organization of the last twenty-four hours seemed to have been fairly successful. A large marquee was already in position, and Philbrick—still in plus fours—and three gardeners were at work putting up a smaller tent.

"That's for the Llanabba Silver Band," said the Doctor. "Philbrick, I required you to take off those loathsome garments."

"They were new when I bought them," said Philbrick. "and they cost eight pounds fifteen. Anyhow I can't do two things at once, can I? If I go back to change, who's going to manage all this, I'd like to know?"

"All right! Finish what you are doing first. Let us just review the arrangements. The marquee is for the visitors' tea. That is Diana's province. I expect we shall find her at work."

Sure enough, there was Dingy helping two servants to arrange plates of highly colored cakes down a trestle table. Two other servants in the background were cutting sandwiches. Dingy, too, was obviously enjoying herself.

"Jane, Emily, remember that that butter has to do for three loaves. Spread it thoroughly, but don't waste it, and cut the crusts as thin as possible. Father, will you see to it that the boys who come in with their parents come in *alone*? You remember last time how Briggs brought in four boys with him, and they ate all the jam sandwiches before Colonel Loder had had any. Mr. Pennyfeather, the champagne cup is *not* for the masters. In fact, I expect you will find yourselves too

much occupied helping the visitors to have any tea until they have left the tent. You had better tell Captain Grimes that, too. I am sure Mr. Prendergast would not think of pushing himself forward."

Outside the marquee were assembled several seats and tubs of palms and flowering shrubs. "All this must be set in order," said the Doctor; "our guests may arrive in less than an hour." He passed on. "The cars shall turn aside from the drive here and come right into the ground. It will give a pleasant background to the photographs, and, Pennyfeather, if you would with tact direct the photographer so that more prominence was given to Mrs. Beste-Chetwynde's Hispano Suiza than to Lady Circumference's little motorcar, I think it would be all to the good. All these things count, you know."

"Nothing seems to have been done about marking out the ground," said Paul

"No," said the Doctor, turning his attention to the field for the first time, "nothing. Well, you must do the best you can. They can't do everything."

"I wonder if any hurdles have come?"

"They were ordered," said the Doctor. "I am certain of it. Philbrick, have any hurdles come?"

"Yes," said Philbrick with a low chuckle.

"Why, pray, do you laugh at the mention of hurdles?"

"Just you look at them!" said Philbrick. "They're behind the tea-house there"

Paul and the Doctor went to look and found a pile of spiked iron railings in sections heaped up at the back of the marquee. They were each about five feet high and were painted green with gilt spikes.

"It seems to me that they have sent the wrong sort," said the Doctor.

"Yes."

"Well, we must do the best we can. What other things ought there to be?"

"Weights, hammer, javelin, long-jump pit, high-jump posts, low hurdles, eggs, spoon and greasy pole," said Philbrick.

"Previously competed for," said the Doctor imperturbably. "What else?"

"Somewhere to run," suggested Paul.

"Why, God bless my soul, they've got the whole park! How did you manage yesterday for the heats?"

"We judged the distance by eye."

"Then that is what we shall have to do today. Really, my dear

Pennyfeather, it is quite unlike you to fabricate difficulties in this way. I am afraid you are getting unnerved. Let them go on racing until it is time for tea; and remember," he added sagely, "the longer the race the more time it takes. I leave the details to you. I am concerned with style. I wish, for instance, we had a starting pistol."

"Would this be any use?" said Philbrick, producing an enormous service revolver. "Only take care; it's loaded."

"The very thing," said the Doctor. "Only fire 'nto the ground, mind. We must do everything we can to avoid an accident. Do you always carry that about with you?"

"Only when I'm wearing my diamonds," said Philbrick.

"Well, I hope that is not often Good gracious! Who are these extraordinary-looking people?"

Ten men of revolting appearance were approaching from the drive. They were low of brow, crafty of eye and crooked of limb. They advanced huddled together with the loping tread of wolves, peering about them furtively as they came, as though in constant terror of ambush; they slavered at their mouths, which hung loosely over their receding chins, while each clutched under his apelike arm a burden of curious and unaccountable shape. On seeing the Doctor they halted and edged back, those behind squinting and mouthing over their companions' shoulders.

"Crikey!" said Philbrick. "Loonies! This is where I shoot."

"I refuse to believe the evidence of my eyes," said the Doctor. "These creatures simply do not exist."

After brief preliminary shuffling and nudging, an elderly man emerged from the back of the group. He had a rough black beard and wore on his uneven shoulders a druidical wreath of brass mistletoe berries.

"Why, it's my friend the station master!" said Philbrick.

"We are the silver band the Lord bless and keep you," said the station master in one breath, "the band that no one could beat whatever but two indeed in the Eisteddfod that for all North Wales was look you."

"I see," said the Doctor; "I see. That's splendid. Well, will you please go into your tent, the little tent over there."

"To march about you would not like us?" suggested the station master; "we have a fine yellow flag look you that embroidered for us was in silks."

"No, no. Into the tent!"

The station master went back to consult with his fellow musicians.



There was a baying and growling and yapping as of the jungle at moonrise, and presently he came forward again with an obsequious, sidelong shuffle.

"Three pounds you pay us would you said indeed to at the sports play."

"Yes, yes, that's right, three pounds. Into the tent!"

"Nothing whatever we can play without the money first," said the station master firmly.

"How would it be," said Philbrick, "if I gave him a clout on the ear?"

"No, no, I beg you to do nothing of the kind. You have not lived in Wales as long as I have." He took a note case from his pocket, the sight of which seemed to galvanize the musicians into life; they crowded round, twitching and chattering. The Doctor took out three pound notes and gave them to the station master. "There you are, Davies!" he said. "Now take your men into the tent. They are on no account to emerge until after tea, do you understand?"

The band slunk away and Paul and the Doctor turned back toward the Castle.

"The Welsh character is an interesting study," said Dr. Fagan. "I have often considered writing a little monograph on the subject, but I was afraid it might make me unpopular in the village. The ignorant speak of them as Celts which is of course wholly erroneous. They are of pure Iberian stock - the aboriginal inhabitants of Europe who survive only in Portugal and the Basque district. Celts readily intermarry with their neighbors and absorb them. From the earliest times the Welsh have been looked upon as an unclean people. It is thus that they have preserved their racial integrity. Their sons and daughters rarely mate with humankind except their own blood relations. In Wales there was no need for legislation to prevent the conquering people intermarrying with the conquered. In Ireland that was necessary, for their intermarriage was a political matter. In Wales it was moral. I hope, by the way, you have no Welsh blood?"

"None whatever," said Paul.

"I was sure you had not, but one cannot be too careful. I once spoke of this subject to the sixth form and learned later that one of them had a Welsh grandmother. I am afraid it hurt his feelings terribly, poor little chap. She came from Pembrokeshire, too, which is of course quite a different matter. I often think," he continued, "that we can trace almost all the disasters of English history to the influence of Wales. Think of Edward of Carnarvon, the first Prince of Wales, a

perverse life, Pennyfeather, and an unseemly death, then the Tudors and the dissolution of the Church, then Lloyd George, the temperance movement, Non-conformity and lust stalking hand in hand through the country, wasting and ravaging. But perhaps you think I exaggerate? I have a certain rhetorical tendency, I admit."

"No, no," said Paul.

"The Welsh," said the Doctor, "are the only nation in the world that has produced no graphic or plastic art, no architecture, no drama. They just sing," he said with disgust, "sing and blow down wind instruments of plated silver. They are deceitful because they cannot discern truth from falsehood, depraved because they cannot discern the consequences of their indulgence. Let us consider," he continued, "the etymological derivations of the Welsh language . . ."

But here he was interrupted by a breathless little boy who panted down the drive to meet them. "Please, sir, Lord and Lady Circumference have arrived, sir. They're in the library with Miss Florence. She asked me to tell you."

"The sports will start in ten minutes," said the Doctor. "Run and tell the other boys to change and go at once to the playing fields. I will talk to you about the Welsh again. It is a matter to which I have given some thought, and I can see that you are sincerely interested. Come in with me and see the Circumferences."

Flossie was talking to them in the library.

"Yes, isn't it a sweet color?" she was saying. "I do like something bright myself. Diana made it for me; she does knit a treat, does Diana, but of course I chose the color, you know, because, you see, Diana's taste is all for wishy-washy grays and browns. Mournful, you know. Well, here's the dad. Lady Circumference was just saying how much she likes my frock what you said was vulgar, so there!"

A stout elderly woman dressed in a tweed coat and skirt and jaunty Tyrolean hat advanced to the Doctor. "Hullo!" she said in a deep bass voice, "how are you? Sorry if we're late. Circumference ran over a fool of a boy. I've just been chaffing your daughter here about her frock. Wish I was young enough to wear that kind of thing. Older I get the more I like color. We're both pretty long in the tooth, eh?" She gave Dr. Fagan a hearty shake of the hand that obviously caused him acute pain. Then she turned to Paul.

"So you're the Doctor's hired assassin, eh? Well, I hope you keep a firm hand on my toad of a son. How's he doin'?"

"Quite well," said Paul.

"Nonsense!" said Lady Circumference. "The boy's a dunderhead."

If he wasn't he wouldn't be here. He wants beatin' and hittin' and knockin' about generally, and then he'll be no good. That grass is shockin' bad on the terrace, Doctor; you ought to sand it down and resow it, but you'll have to take that cedar down if you ever want it to grow properly at the side. I hate cuttin' down a tree—like losin' a tooth—but you have to choose, tree or grass; you can't keep 'em both. What d'you pay your head man?"

As she was talking Lord Circumference emerged from the shadows and shook Paul's hand. He had a long fair mustache and large watery eyes which reminded Paul a little of Mr. Frendergast.

"How do you do?" he said.

"How do you do?" said Paul.

"Fond of sport, eh?" he said. "I mean these sort of sports?"

"Oh, yes," said Paul. "I think they're so good for the boys."

"Do you? Do you think that?" said Lord Circumference very earnestly; "do you think they're good for the boys?"

"Yes," said Paul; "don't you?"

"Me? Yes, oh, yes. I think so, too. Very good for the boys."

"So useful in case of a war or anything," said Paul.

"D'you think so? D'you really and truly think so? That there's going to be another war, I mean?"

"Yes, I'm sure of it, aren't you?"

"Yes of course, I'm sure of it too. And that awful bread, and people coming onto one's own land and telling one what one's to do with one's own butter and milk, and commandeering one's horses! Oh, yes, all over again! My wife shot her hunters rather than let them go to the army. And girls in breeches on all the farms! All over again! Who do you think it will be this time?"

"The Americans," said Paul stoutly.

"No, indeed, I hope not. We had German prisoners on two of the farms. That wasn't so bad, but if they start putting Americans on my land, I'll just refuse to stand it. My daughter brought an American down to luncheon the other day, and, do you know . . . ?"

"Dig it and dung it," said Lady Circumference. "Only it's got to be dug deep, mind. Now how did your calceolarias do last year?"

"I really have no idea," said the Doctor. "Flossie, how did our calceolarias do?"

"Lovely," said Flossie.

"I don't believe a word of it," said Lady Circumference. "Nobody's calceolarias did well last year."

"Shall we adjourn to the playing fields?" said the Doctor. "I expect they are all waiting for us."

Talking cheerfully, the party crossed the hall and went down the steps.

"Your drive's awful wet," said Lady Circumference. "I expect there's a blocked pipe somewhere. Sure it ain't sewage?"

"I was never any use at short distances," Lord Circumference was saying. "I was always a slow starter, but I was once eighteenth in the Crick at Rugby. We didn't take sports so seriously at the 'Varsity when I was up: everybody rode. What college were you at?"

"Scone."

"Scone, were you? Ever come across a young nephew of my wife's called Alastair Digby-Vaine-Trumpington?"

"I just met him," said Paul.

"That's very interesting. Greta, Mr. Pennyfeather knows Alastair."

"Does he? Well that boy's doing no good for himself. Got fined twenty pounds the other day, his mother told me. Seemed proud of it. If my brother had been alive he'd have licked all that out of the young cub. It takes a man to bring up a man."

"Yes," said Lord Circumference meekly.

"Who else do you know at Oxford? Do you know Freddy French-Wise?"

"No."

"Or Tom Obblethwaite or that youngest Castleton boy?"

"No, I'm afraid not. I had a great friend called Potts."

"Potts!" said Lady Circumference, and left it at that.

All the school and several local visitors were assembled in the field. Grimes stood by himself, looking depressed. Mr. Prendergast, flushed and unusually vivacious, was talking to the Vicar. As the headmaster's party came into sight the Llanabba Silver Band struck up *Men of Harlech*.

"Shockin' noise," commented Lady Circumference graciously.

The head prefect came forward and presented her with a program, beribboned and embossed in gold. Another prefect set a chair for her. She sat down with the Doctor next to her and Lord Circumference on the other side of him.

"Pennyfeather," cried the Doctor above the band, "start them racing."

Philbrick gave Paul a megaphone. "I found this in the pavilion," he said. "I thought it might be useful."

"Who's that extraordinary man?" asked Lady Circumference

"He is the boxing coach and swimming professional," said the Doctor "A finely developed figure, don't you think?"

"First race," said Paul through the megaphone, "under sixteen Quarter mile!" He read out Grimes's list of starters.

"What's Tangent doin' in this race?" said Lady Circumference "The boy can't run an inch"

The silver band stopped playing

"The course," said Paul, "starts from the pavilion, goes round that clump of elms"

"Beeches" corrected Lady Circumference loudly

"and ends in front of the bandstand" Starter, Mr Prendergast, timekeeper, Captain Grimes

"I shall say, 'Are you ready' one, two, three' and then fire" said Mr Prendergast "Are you ready?" One — there was a terrific report "Oh dear! I'm sorry" but the race had begun Clearly Tangent was not going to win he was sitting on the grass crying because he had been wounded in the foot by Mr Prendergast's bullet Philbrick carried him wailing dismally into the refreshment tent, where Dingy helped him off with his shoe His heel was slightly grazed Dingy gave him a large slice of cake and he hobbled out surrounded by a sympathetic crowd

"That won't hurt him," said Lady Circumference, "but I think someone ought to remove the pistol from that old man before he does anything serious"

"I knew that was going to happen" said Lord Circumference

"A most unfortunate beginning" said the Doctor

"Am I going to die?" said Tangent his mouth full of cake

"For God's sake look after Prendy" said Grimes in Paul's ear "The man's as tight as a rod, and on one whisky, too"

"First blood to me!" said Mr Prendergast gleefully

"The last race will be run again," said Paul down the megaphone. "Starter, Mr Philbrick timekeeper, Mr Prendergast"

"On your marks! Get set!" Bang went the pistol, this time without disaster The six little boys scampered off through the mud, disappeared behind the beeches and returned rather more slowly Captain Grimes and Mr Prendergast held up a piece of tape

"Well run, sir!" shouted Colonel Sidebotham "Jolly good race"

"Capital," said Mr Prendergast and, dropping his end of the tape, he sauntered over to the Colonel "I can see you are a fine judge of a race, sir So was I once So's Grimes A capital fellow, Grimes, a

bounder, you know, but a capital fellow. Bounders can be capital fellows, don't you agree, Colonel Slidebottom? In fact, I'd go farther and say that capital fellows *are* bounders. What do you say to that? I do wish you'd stop pulling at my arm, Pennyfeather. Colonel Shybotham and I are just having a most interesting conversation about bounders."

The silver band struck up again, and Mr. Prendergast began a little jig, saying: "Capital fellow! capital fellow!" and snapping his fingers. Paul led him to the refreshment tent.

"Dingy wants you to help her in there," he said firmly, "and, for God's sake, don't come out until you feel better."

"I never felt better in my life," said Mr. Prendergast indignantly. "Capital fellow! capital fellow!"

"It is not my affair, of course," said Colonel Slidebottom, "but if you ask me I should say that man had been drinking."

"He was talking very excitedly to me," said the Vicar, "about some apparatus for warming a church in Worthing and about the Apostolic Claims of the Church of Abyssinia. I confess I could not follow him clearly. He seems deeply interested in Church matters. Are you quite sure he is right in the head? I have noticed again and again since I have been in the Church that lay interest in ecclesiastical matters is often a prelude to insanity."

"Drink, pure and simple," said the Colonel. "I wonder where he got it? I could do with a spot of whisky."

"Quarter Mile Open!" said Paul through his megaphone.

Presently the Clutterbucks arrived. Both the parents were stout. They brought with them two small children, a governess, and an elder son. They debouched from the car one by one, stretching their limbs in evident relief.

"This is Sam," said Mr. Clutterbuck, "just down from Cambridge. He's joined me in the business, and we've brought the nippers along for a treat. Don't mind, do you, Doc? And last, but not least, my wife."

Dr. Fagan greeted them with genial condescension and found them seats.

"I am afraid you have missed all the jumping events," he said. "But I have a list of the results here. You will see that Percy has done extremely well."

"Didn't know the little beggar had it in him. See that, Martha? Percy's won the high jump and the long jump and the hurdles. How's your young hopeful been doing, Lady Circumference?"

"My boy has been injured in the foot," said Lady Circumference coldly.

"Dear me! Not badly, I hope? Did he twist his ankle in the jumping?"

"No," said Lady Circumference, "he was shot at by one of the assistant masters. But it is kind of you to inquire."

"Three Miles Open!" announced Paul. "The course of six laps will be run as before."

"On your marks! Get set!" Bang went Philbrick's revolver. Off trotted the boys on another race.

"Father," said Flossie, "don't you think it's time for the tea interval?"

"Nothing can be done before Mrs. Beste-Chetwynde arrives," said the Doctor.

Round and round the muddy track trotted the athletes while the silver band played sacred music unceasingly.

"Last lap!" announced Paul.

The school and the visitors crowded about the tape to cheer the winner. Amid loud applause Clutterbuck breasted the tape well ahead of the others.

"Well run! On good, jolly good, sir!" cried Colonel Sidebotham.

"Good old Percy! That's the stuff," said Mr. Clutterbuck.

"Well run, Percy!" chorused the two little Clutterbucks, prompted by their governess.

"That boy cheated," said Lady Circumference. "He only went round five times. I counted."

"I think unpleasantness so mars the afternoon," said the Vicar.

"How dare you suggest such a thing?" asked Mrs. Clutterbuck. "I appeal to the referee. Percy ran the full course, didn't he?"

"Clutterbuck wins," said Captain Grimes.

"Fiddlesticks!" said Lady Circumference. "He deliberately lagged behind and joined the others as they went behind the beeches. The little toad!"

"Really, Gretta," said Lord Circumference, "I think we ought to abide by the referee's decision."

"Well, they can't expect me to give away the prizes, then. Nothing would induce me to give that boy a prize."

"Do you understand, madam, that you are bringing a serious accusation against my son's honor?"

"Serious accusation fiddlesticks! What he wants is a jolly good hidin'."

"No doubt you judge other people's sons by your own. Let me tell you, Lady Circumference . . ."

"Don't attempt to browbeat me, sir. I know a cheat when I see one."

At this stage of the discussion the Doctor left Mrs. Hope-Browne's side, where he had been remarking upon her son's progress in geometry, and joined the group round the winning post.

"If there is a disputed decision," he said genially, "they shall race again."

"Percy has won already," said Mr. Clutterbuck. "He has been adjudged the winner."

"Splendid! splendid! A promising little athlete. I congratulate you, Clutterbuck."

"But he only ran five laps," said Lady Circumference.

"Then clearly he has won the five-furlong race, a very exacting length."

"But the other boys," said Lady Circumference, almost beside herself with rage, "have run six lengths."

"Then they," said the Doctor imperturbably, "are first, second, third, fourth and fifth respectively in the Three Miles. Clearly there has been some confusion. Diana, I think we might now serve tea."



# THE DECLINE OF SPORT

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by E. B. WHITE

*Perhaps it is just as well that this anthology is being published in 1960. Thirteen years have passed since E. B. White predicted this humorous prediction of the shape of things to come in sport and already his fantastic prophecies have a grim echo. E. B. White, surely the most brilliant essayist of our time, is inextricably associated with the New Yorker Magazine, in which all but a few of his essays, his straightforward, humorous pieces and his, only have appeared. His is also the anonymous pen that wrote for more than two decades the talk of "Society and Commerce" which leads off that magazine's weekly "Talk of the Town." Mr. White's sports prophecies have been described as follows by his old colleague "Charles" Thompson: "He plays a fair pin-pong, a good piano, and a terrible poker. He is good enough with axe, rifle and canoe and sails a thirty foot boat." (p. 11)*

**I**N THE THIRD DECADE of the supersonic age, sport gripped the nation in an ever tightening grip. The horse tracks, the ball parks, the fight rings, the gridirons, all drew crowds in steadily increasing numbers. Every time a game was played, an attendance record was broken. Usually some other sort of record was broken, too—such as the record for the number of consecutive doubles hit by left-handed batters in a Series game, or some such thing as that. Records fell like ripe apples on a windy day. Customs and manners changed, and the five-day business week was reduced to four days, then to three, to give everyone a better chance to memorize the scores.

Not only did sport proliferate but the demands it made on the spectator became greater. Nobody was content to take in one event at a time, and thanks to the magic of radio and television nobody had to. A Yale alumnus, class returning to the Bowl with 197,000 others to see the Yale-Cornell football game would take

along his pocket radio and pick up the Yankee Stadium, so that while his eye might be following a tumble on the Cornell twenty-two-yard line, his ear would be following a man going down to second in the top of the fifth, seventy miles away. High in the blue sky above the Bowl, skywriters would be at work writing the scores of other major and minor sporting contests, weaving an interminable record of victory and defeat, and using the new high-visibility pink news-smoke perfected by Pepsi-Cola engineers. And in the frames of the giant video sets, just behind the goal posts, this same alumnus could watch Dejected win the Futurity before a record-breaking crowd of 349,872 at Belmont, each of whom was tuned to the Yale Bowl and following the World Series game in the video and searching the sky for further news of events either under way or just completed. The effect of this vast cyclorama of sport was to divide the spectator's attention, oversubtilize his appreciation, and deaden his passion. As the fourth supersonic decade was ushered in, the picture changed and sport began to wane.

A good many factors contributed to the decline of sport. Substitutions in football had increased to such an extent that there were very few fans in the United States capable of holding the players in mind during play. Each play that was called saw two entirely new elevens lined up, and the players whose names and faces you had familiarized yourself with in the first period were seldom seen or heard of again. The spectacle became as diffuse as the main concourse in Grand Central at the commuting hour.

Express motor highways leading to the parks and stadia had become so wide, so unobstructed, so devoid of all life except automobiles and trees that sport fans had got into the habit of traveling enormous distances to attend events. The normal driving speed had been stepped up to ninety-five miles an hour, and the distance between cars had been decreased to fifteen feet. This put an extraordinary strain on the sport lover's nervous system, and he arrived home from a Saturday game, after a road trip of three hundred and fifty miles, glassy-eyed, dazed, and spent. He hadn't really had any relaxation and he had failed to see Czlika (who had gone in for Trusky) take the pass from Bkeeo (who had gone in for Bjallo) in the third period, because at that moment a youngster named Lavagetto had been put in to pinch-hit for Art Gurlack in the bottom of the ninth with the tying run on second, and the skywriter who was attempting to write "Princeton 0—Lafayette 43" had banked the wrong way, muffed the "3," and distracted everyone's attention from the fact that Lavagetto had been whiffed.

Cheering, of course, lost its stimulating effect on players, because cheers were no longer associated necessarily with the immediate scene but might as easily apply to something that was happening somewhere else. This was enough to infuriate even the steadiest performer. A football star, hearing the stands break into a roar before the ball was snapped, would realize that their minds were not on him and would become dispirited and grumpy. Two or three of the big coaches worried so about this that they considered equipping all players with tiny ear sets, so that they, too, could keep abreast of other sporting events while playing, but the idea was abandoned as impractical, and the coaches put it aside in tickler files, to bring up again later.

I think the event that marked the turning point in sport and started it downhill was the Midwest's classic Dust Bowl game of 1975, when Eastern Reserve's great right end, Ed Pistachio, was shot by a spectator. This man, the one who did the shooting, was seated well down in the stands near the forty-yard line on a bleak October afternoon and was so saturated with sport and with the disappointments of sport that he had clearly become deranged. With a minute and fifteen seconds to play and the score tied, the Eastern Reserve quarterback had whipped a long pass over Army's heads into Pistachio's waiting arms. There was no other player anywhere near him, and all Pistachio had to do was catch the ball and run it across the line. He dropped it. At exactly this moment, the spectator—a man named Homer T. Parkinson, of 35 Edgemere Drive, Toledo, O—suffered at least three other major disappointments in the realm of sport. His horse, Hiccough, on which he had a five-hundred-dollar bet, fell while getting away from the starting gate at Pimlico and broke its leg (clearly visible in the video); his favorite shortstop, Lucky Frimstitch, struck out and let three men die on base in the final game of the Series (to which Parkinson was tuned); and the Governor Dunmer soccer team, on which Parkinson's youngest son played goalie, lost to Kent, 4-3, as recorded in the sky overhead. Before anyone could stop him, he drew a gun and drilled Pistachio, before 954,000 persons, the largest crowd that had ever attended a football game and the *second* largest crowd that had ever assembled for any sporting event in any month except July.

This tragedy, by itself, wouldn't have caused sport to decline, I suppose, but it set in motion a chain of other tragedies, the cumulative effect of which was terrific. Almost as soon as the shot was fired, the news flash was picked up by one of the skywriters directly above the field. He glanced down to see whether he could spot the trouble

below, and in doing so failed to see another skywriter approaching. The two planes collided and fell, wings locked, leaving a confusing trail of smoke, which some observers tried to interpret as a late sports score. The planes struck in the middle of the nearby eastbound coast-to-coast Sunlight Parkway, and a motorist driving a convertible coupé stopped so short, to avoid hitting them, that he was bumped from behind. The pile-up of cars that ensued involved 1,482 vehicles, a record for eastbound parkways. A total of more than three thousand persons lost their lives in the highway accident, including the two pilots, and when panic broke out in the stadium, it cost another 872 in dead and injured. News of the disaster spread quickly to other sports arenas, and started other panics among the crowds trying to get to the exits, where they could buy a paper and study a list of the dead. All in all, the afternoon of sport cost 20,003 lives, a record. And nobody had much to show for it except one small Midwestern boy who hung around the smoking wrecks of the planes, captured some aero news-smoke in a milk bottle, and took it home as a souvenir.

From that day on, sport waned. Through long, noncompetitive Saturday afternoons, the stadia slumbered. Even the parkways fell into disuse as motorists rediscovered the charms of old, twisty roads that led through main streets and past barnyards, with their mild congestions and pleasant smells.

# KNYPE v. MANCHESTER ROVERS

*from*  
THE MATADOR OF THE FIVE TOWNS

by ARNOLD BENNETT

(1912)

*In one of Arnold Bennett's plays there is a character who says 'I'm not a blooming reformer I'm a merchant'. Bennett might well have said the same thing about his own career. He turned out dozens of undistinguished books for the money that was in them, but along the line he wrote half a dozen genuine classics. Bennett at his best is just about as good a novelist as this century has produced: his are novels of realism about shopkeepers and people in the streets. In this brilliant picture of football Bennett turns up with some of his best writing about people in the Grand Stand. They range all the way from the fanatic individuals who are quite prepared to commit homicide upon the referee to the narrator himself, completely uninformed and indifferent at the beginning to the entire world of football but caught up in its drama despite himself.*

WE WENT on the Grand Stand, which was packed with men whose eyes were fixed, with an unconscious but intense effort, on a common object. Among the men were a few women in furs and wraps, equally absorbed. Nobody took any notice of us as we insinuated our way up a rickety flight of wooden stairs, but when by misadventure we grazed a human being the elbow of that being shoved itself automatically and fiercely outwards to repel. I had an impression of hats, caps, and woolly overcoats stretched in long parallel lines, and of grimy raw planks everywhere presenting possibly dangerous splinters, save where use had worn them into smooth shininess. Then gradually I became aware of the vast field, which was more brown than green. Around the field was a wide border of infinitesimal hats and pale faces, rising in tiers, and beyond this border fences, hoardings, chimneys, furnaces, gasometers, telegraph-poles, houses, and dead trees. And here and there, perched in strange perilous places, even high up towards the sombre sky, were more human beings clinging. On the field itself, at one end of it, were a scattered handful of doll-like figures, motionless;

some had white bodies, others red, and three were in black, all were so small and so far off that they seemed to be mere unimportant casual incidents in whatever recondite affair it was that was proceeding. Then a whistle shrieked, and all these figures began simultaneously to move, and then I saw a ball in the air. An obscure, uneasy murmuring rose from the immense multitude like an invisible but audible vapour. The next instant the vapour had condensed into a sudden shout. Now I saw the ball rolling solitary in the middle of the field, and a single red doll racing towards it, at one end was a confused group of red and white, and at the other were two white dolls, rather lonely in the expanse. The single red doll overtook the ball and scudded along with it at his twinkling toes. A great voice behind me bellowed with an incredible volume of sound.

"Now, Jos!"

And another voice, farther away, bellowed

"Now, Jos!"

And still more distantly the grim warning shot forth from the crowd

"Now, Jos! Now, Jos!"

The nearest of the white dolls, as the red one approached, sprang forward. I could see a leg. And the ball was flying back in a magnificent curve into the skies; it passed out of my sight, and then I heard a bump on the slates of the roof of the grand stand, and it fell among the crowd in the stand-enclosure. But almost before the flight of the ball had commenced, a terrific roar of relief had rolled formidably round the field, and out of that roar, like rockets out of thick smoke, burst acutely ecstatic cries of adoration.

"Bravo, Jos!"

"Good old Jos!"

The leg had evidently been Jos's leg. The nearest of these two white dolls must be Jos, darling of fifteen thousand frenzied people.

Stirling punched a neighbour in the side to attract his attention.

"What's the score?" he demanded of the neighbour, who scowled and then grinned.

"Two-one,agen us!" The other growled. "It'll take our boys all their time to draw. They're playing a man short."

"Accident?"

"No! Referee ordered him off for rough play."

Several spectators began to explain passionately, furiously, that the referee's action was utterly bereft of common sense and justice, and I gathered that a less gentlemanly crowd would undoubtedly have lynched the referee. The explanations died down, and everybody except me resumed his fierce watch on the field.

I was recalled from the exercise of a vague curiosity upon the set,

anxious faces around me by a crashing, whooping cheer which in volume and sincerity of joy surpassed all noises in my experience. This massive cheer reverberated round the field like the echoes of a battleship's broadside in a fiord. But it was human, and therefore more terrible than guns. I instinctively thought: "If such are the symptoms of pleasure, what must be the symptoms of pain or disappointment?" Simultaneously with the expulsion of the unique noise the expression of the faces changed. Eyes sparkled; teeth became prominent in enormous, uncontrolled smiles. Ferocious satisfaction had to find vent in ferocious gestures, wreaked either upon dead wood or upon the living tissues of fellow-creatures. The gentle, manly sound of hand-clapping was a kind of light froth on the surface of the billowy sea of heartfelt applause. The host of the fifteen thousand might have just had their lives saved, or their children snatched from destruction and their wives from dishonour: they might have been preserved from bankruptcy, starvation, prison, torture; they might have been rewarding with their impassioned worship a band of national heroes. But it was not so. All that had happened was that the ball had rolled into the net of the Manchester Rovers' goal. Knype had drawn level. The reputation of the Five Towns before the jury of expert opinion that could distinguish between first-class football and second-class was maintained intact. I could hear specialists around me proving that though Knype had yet five League matches to play, its situation was safe. They pointed excitedly to a huge hoarding at one end of the ground on which appeared names of other clubs with changing figures. These clubs included the clubs which Knype would have to meet before the end of the season, and the figures indicated their fortunes on various grounds similar to this ground all over the country. If a goal was scored in Newcastle, or in Southampton, the very Peru of first-class football, it was registered on that board and its possible effect on the destinies of Knype was instantly assessed. The calculations made were dizzying.

Then a little flock of pigeons flew up and separated, under the illusion that they were free agents and masters of the air, but really wafted away to fixed destinations on the stupendous atmospheric waves of still-continued cheering.

After a minute or two the ball was restarted, and the greater noise had diminished to the sensitive uneasy murmur which responded like a delicate instrument to the fluctuations of the game. Each feat and manœuvre of Knype drew generous applause in proportion to its intention or its success, and each sleight of the Manchester Rovers, successful or not, provoked a holy disgust. The attitude of the host had passed beyond morality into religion.

Then, again, while my attention had lapsed from the field, a devilish, a barbaric, and a deafening yell broke from those fifteen thousand passionate hearts. It thrilled me; it genuinely frightened me. I involuntarily made the motion of swallowing. After the thunderous crash of anger from the host came the thin sound of a whistle. The game stopped. I heard the same word repeated again and again, in divers tones of exasperated fury:

"Foul!"

I felt that I was hemmed in by potential homicides, whose arms were lifted in the desire of murder and whose features were changed from the likeness of man into the corporeal form of some pure and terrible instinct.

And I saw a long doll rise from the ground and approach a lesser doll with threatening hands.

"Foul! Foul!"

"Go it, Jos! Knock his neck out! Jos! He tripped thee up!"

There was a prolonged gesticulatory altercation between the three black dolls in leather leggings and several of the white and the red dolls. At last one of the mannikins in leggings shrugged his shoulders, made a definite gesture to the other two, and walked away towards the edge of the field nearest the stand. It was the unprincipled referee; he had disallowed the foul. In the protracted duel between the offending Manchester forward and the great, honest Jos Myatt he had given another point to the enemy. As soon as the host realized the infamy it yelled once more in heightened fury. It seemed to surge in masses against the thick iron railings that alone stood between the referee and death. The discreet referee was approaching the grand stand as the least unsafe place. In a second a handful of executioners had somehow got on to the grass. And in the next second several policemen were in front of them, not striking nor striving to intimidate, but heavily pushing them into bounds.

"Get back there!" cried a few abrupt, commanding voices from the stand.

The referee stood with his hands in his pockets and his whistle in his mouth. I think that in that moment of acutest suspense the whole of his earthly career must have flashed before him in a phantasmagoria. And then the crisis was past. The inherent gentlemanliness of the outraged host had triumphed and the referee was spared.

"Served him right if they'd man-handled him!" said a spectator.

"Ay!" said another, gloomily, "ay! And th' Football Association 'ud ha' fined us maybe a hundred quid and disqualified th' ground for the rest o' th' season!"



"D— —n th' Football Association!"

"Ay! But you canna'!"

"Now, lads! Play up, Knype! Now, lads! Give 'em hot hell!" Different voices heartily encouraged the home team as the ball was thrown into play.

The fouling Manchester forward immediately resumed possession of the ball. Experience could not teach him. He parted with the ball and got it again, twice. The devil was in him and in the ball. The devil was driving him towards Myatt. They met. And then came a sound quite new, a cracking sound, somewhat like the snapping of a bough, but sharper, more decisive.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Stirling. "That's his bone!"

And instantly he was off down the staircase and I after him. But he was not the first doctor on the field. Nothing had been unforeseen in the wonderful organization of this enterprise. A pigeon sped away and an official doctor and an official stretcher appeared, miraculously, simultaneously. It was tremendous. It inspired awe in me.

"He asked for it!" I heard a man say as I hesitated on the shore of the ocean of mud.

Then I knew that it was Manchester and not Knype that had suffered. The confusion and hubbub were in a high degree disturbing and puzzling. But one emotion emerged clear: pleasure. I felt it myself. I was aware of joy in that the two sides were now levelled to ten men apiece. I was mystically identified with the Five Towns, absorbed into their life. I could discern on every face the conviction that a divine providence was in this affair: that God could not be mocked. I too had this conviction. I could discern also on every face the fear lest the referee might give a foul against the hero Myatt, or even order him off the field, though of course the fracture was a simple accident. I too had this fear. It was soon dispelled by the news which swept across the entire enclosure like a sweet smell: that the referee had adopted the theory of a simple accident. I saw vaguely policemen, a stretcher, streaming crowds, and my ears heard a monstrous universal babbling. And then the figure of Stirling detached itself from the moving disorder and came to me.

"Well, Myatt's call was harder than the other chap's, that's all," he said.

"Which is Myatt?" I asked. For the red and the white dolls had vanished at close quarters and were replaced by unrecognizably gigantic human animals, still clad, however, in dolls' vests and dolls' knickerbockers.

Stirling warningly jerked his head to indicate a man not ten feet away from me. This was Myatt, the hero of the host and the darling of popula-

tions. I gazed up at him. His mouth, and his left knee were red with blood, and he was piebald with thick patches of mud from his tousled crown to his enormous boot. His blue eyes had a heavy, stupid, honest glance; and of the three qualities stupidity predominated. He seemed to be all feet, knees, hands and elbows. His head was very small—the sole remainder of the doll in him.

A little man approached him, conscious—somewhat too obviously conscious—of his right to approach. Myatt nodded.

“Ye’n settled *him*, seemingly, Jos!” said the little man.

“Well,” said Myatt, with slow bitterness. “Hadn’t he been blooming well begging and praying for it, aw afternoon? Hadn’t he now?”

The little man nodded. Then he said in a lower tone:

“How’s missis, like?”

“Her’s altogether yet,” said Myatt. “Or I’d none ha’ played!”

“I’ve bet Watty half-a-dollar as it inna’ a lad!” said the little man.

Myatt seemed angry.

“Wilt bet me halt a *quid* as it inna’ a lad?” he demanded, bending down and scowling and sticking out his muddy chin.

“Ay!” said the little man, not blenching.

“Evens?”

“Evens.”

“I’ll take thee, Charlie,” said Myatt, resuming his calm.

The whistle sounded. And several orders were given to clear the field. Eight minutes had been lost over a broken leg, but Stirling said that the referee would surely deduct them from the official time, so that after all the game would not be shortened.

“I’ll be up yon, to-morra morning,” said the little man.

Myatt nodded and departed. Charlie, the little man, turned on his heel and proudly rejoined the crowd. He had been seen of all in converse with supreme greatness.

Stirling and I also retired; and though Jos Myatt had not even done his doctor the honour of seeing him, neither of us, I think, was quite without a consciousness of glory: I cannot imagine why. The rest of the game was flat and tame. Nothing occurred. The match ended in a draw

# ALI THE TERRIBLE TURK

*from*

NIGHT AND THE CITY

*by* GERALD KERSH

*Is professional wrestling a sport? American television watchers today have good reason to think it is a theatrical art. But there were giants in other days, and wrestling, even though it may have been the most brutal of sports, was a sport and one that was on the level. Even then, however, wrestlers (like Ali, the hero of this excerpt) seem to have been born to be exploited by villains, and Harry Fabian, the central figure of Gerald Kersh's incisive picture of slum and ranter London, is surely one of the most loathsome characters in modern fiction. There is more than a little of Dickens in Kersh's stories of the London underworld a century later.*

FROM THE GYMNASIUM came the noise of two men shouting together. Kraton was roaring with laughter, while Ali grunted with rage. Adam stood between them.

"What's the trouble?" said Fabian.

Ali replied: "There is only two kinds of Cypriot. There is the Cypriot who always giggles, and the Cypriot who never smiles."

"Hoh-hoh-hoh!" laughed Kraton.

"The first kind laughs all the time because he is too stupid to see

that he is really something to weep at; the other frowns all the time, because he is too foolish to see how ridiculous he is."

Kration still laughed. Ali went on, at the top of his voice: "They all wave their hair. They have only three trades. There is no Cypriot who is not a barber, a tailor, or a kitchen boy. In the end they all call themselves wrestlers. But damn it, their national sport is dominoes. They hang down the dominoes, and shout—that is the game. They make love to servant girls who take them to the pictures. Then they are national heroes. And they all fight like slaves. *Ptooo*, and *ptooo* on the Cypriot!"

"Big belly!" laughed Kration, showing twenty brilliant teeth. When Kration laughed he looked like a man who was completely satisfied with himself. The expression of his smiling face said: "If I were not Kration, I should be God Almighty." But as soon as his mouth closed his face changed. Savagery came into it. He looked strong and ferocious enough to tear himself apart. His hair crouched low on his forehead, trying to obliterate his eyebrows; his eyebrows, colliding over his nose in a spray of black hair, endeavored to smother his eyes; and only the flat, heavy prow of his nose kept his eyes apart—otherwise, they would have snapped at each other. Meanwhile they waited, smoldering; while his upper lip snarled in triumph over the lower, which, from time to time, jumped up and clamped down on it. Turkey, Greece, and Africa waged war in his veins. Even his hair carried on ancient warfare. There was antagonism in his very follicles, and the hair writhed out, enormously thick, twisted, rebellious, kinked, frizzled, and dried up.

He said to Adam: "He too old to hit. I hit him once, he die. One finger enough. Tiss finger. look!" He wagged a forefinger.

"Lay off!" said Fabian.

"He said I was old! He said I was fat."

Fabian grinned. "Old? Fat? H-ll, can't we all see you're a two-year-old? Ain't you wasting away to a shadow?"

"You may joke, yes. But let me fight him. I will show him how old I am. . . . *Tfoo*, I say! Didn't your grandmother learn that a Turk was a better man than a Cypriot while your grandfather hid under the bed? Mongrel!"

"You—"

"Hold um!" yelled Fabian, and attached himself, like a mosquito, to Ali's wrist, while Adam threw his arms round Kration and held him. The Cypriot shook himself. Adam's feet left the floor.

"Listen! Listen!" shouted Fabian. "What's the excitement? You two are having a chance to fight it out in the ring. I'm billing you as a surprise item for next show. Why waste your energy down here, mugs? Ali is making a comeback, see? Ali the Terrible Turk, and Kraton See?"

"Good," said Ali.

"No," said Kraton, "my friends will laugh at me for fighting an old man."

"Two guineas apiece!" said Fabian.

"No," said Kraton.

Ali suggested "Give him four, my two and his two. I will fight him for nothing."

"Well?" said Fabian.

"Right," said Kraton.

Ali sneered "They can be bought, these champions. *Ptoo!* He would sell his brother and sister for a small cup of coffee. His friends would laugh at him! Hou! They will laugh all the more when I tie him up like a brown-paper parcel."

Kraton replied over his shoulder "Fat guts say your prayers."

Adam took Fabian aside, and said

"Seriously, are you going to let those two fight?"

"Why not?"

"It's a crime! Ali's nearly seventy, Kraton's not yet thirty. Ali's old but he won't admit it. And he's sick."

"Boloney! He's a tiger."

"But —"

"What are you worrying about? Afraid he'll drop dead, or something?"

"I'm afraid he'll take a beating and I don't want to see it."

"Then stay away."

"I'll give you a fiver if you'll call the fight off."

"Are you trying to offer me money to interfere with sport? Besides, there's more than that in it for me."

"Oh, go and drown yourself." Adam went to the dressing room, and found Ali. "Ali, do me a favor. Call this crazy fight off."

"Why?"

"Why? You get nothing for it, and besides, Kraton's not a wrestler; he's a rough-house specialist, a killer."

"Yah? And I am a hangman."

"But, Ali!"

Ali turned with bulging eyes. "Go to the devil! Leave me alone!" he said.

Adam and Nosseross walked through the sharp air of the morning, to the Corner House.

"Oh, my Christ," said Nosseross, "look who's here!"

It was Fabian, somewhat flushed with excitement, drinking coffee at an adjacent table. Even as Nosseross spoke, Fabian cried: "Oh, boy, oh, boy, do my eyes deceive me?" and came to their table. "What, Phil Nosseross, you old crook, you! Listen, Phil, if you wanna see a show, come and see the one I'm running. Listen, Phil, you've heard of Ali the Terrible Turk? He's making a comeback. And is that man in form or is he in form? I'll tell you—he's in form. Is this gonna be a needle fight or is this gonna be a needle fight? Boy, will they tear lumps out of each other!"

Adam said: "I have half a mind to smack you on the nose."

"Go on, then, smack me on the nose!" said Fabian. "Am I supposed to be scared?"

"What is all this, anyway?" asked Nosseross.

"The fight of the century. Ali the Terrible Turk against Kraton. Coming?"

"What, old Ali? He must be getting on for seventy. I saw him thirty years ago, and he wasn't anybody's chicken then. But what a fighter!" said Nosseross. "Not much skill, mind you, and no psychology, but what a terror! Heart of a lion, and about as strong as a bear. Is he still alive?"

"You'll see," said Fabian.

"Listen," said Adam, "let me referee that fight."

"I'm refereeing it myself," said Fabian. He grinned at Nosseross. "He's scared in case Ali—"

"It's not that. Poor old Ali's finished, and you know it. He can't win. About the only thing he's got left is his pride. He's only got one eye. The only thing that keeps him going is the fact that he's never been defeated. And now you match him against a man forty years younger. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"Any betting on this fight?" asked Fabian, grinning.

"With you refereeing it?" said Adam. "Thanks."

"Betting?" said Nosseross. "You're crazy. Dog racing is dirty, boxing isn't clean; racing stinks a bit; but wrestling! There hasn't been a straight match in forty years."

Fabian grinned in Adam's face. "I thought you'd be scared to bet on Ali," he said.

"What odds are you laying?"

"Twenties on Kraton."

"I'll take you," said Adam. "Give me forty pounds to two."

"You're on."

"Idiot," said Nosseross, when Fabian had gone. "Why d'you let him rib you into giving him two pounds?"

"I'm not so sure. Old Ali'll never lie down while there's breath in him. But I'd give a tanner to have this fight called off," said Adam.

Here, in one of the dressing rooms, Ali was preparing for the fight. Ali was fat, fantastically fat. When he was naked, one could see how malevolently time had dealt with him; blowing him up like a balloon, and dragging him down like a bursting sack. His pectorals hung flabbily, like the breasts of an old woman. His belly sagged!

He brushed his mustache, pinched out a length of Hungarian Pomade, and molded the ends to needle points with a dexterous twirl.

"Kraton'll try and grab that," said Adam, "just to give the lads a laugh."

"Let him try!"

"Ali, why not trim it down?"

Ali swore that he would as soon trim down another essentially masculine attribute. He put on a curious belt, nearly a foot wide, made of canvas and rubber. "Pull this tight, please, as tight as you can," he said; and muttered, with an apologetic look, "I do not want the people to be under an impression that I have been getting a little bit fat. . . ."

Adam pulled at the straps, and, like toothpaste in a tube, soft fat oozed up above Ali's waistline.

"Ali, is this wise? This belt squeezes your guts together. If Kraton hits you, or kicks you there—"

"Let him try." Ali writhed into a set of long black tights, and pulled over them a pair of red silk shorts. "Now, help me with this sash." He held up a long band of frayed red satin, embroidered with Arabic characters. "This was a present from Abdul Hamid. . . ."

"Ali, you're crazy to press your belly in like that!"

"*Ptah!*" Ali drew himself up, and stood with folded arms. "Tell me, do I look good?"

Adam felt an impulse to shed tears. "Fine!"

"One day, I let you sculpture me."

"Thanks, Ali. Listen, Ali; be cautious, for heaven's sake."

"My little friend, you forget that I have won hundreds of fights—that I have never been beaten!"

"I know. But I should hate like hell to see you hurt."

Ali laughed. "Professor Froehner tore one of my ribs right out of the skin, but I beat him; and I fought again next day. In all my life, nobody ever heard me cry out! Nobody ever saw me tap the mat. Leblond had me by the foot in a jujitsu hold. 'Give in, or I break your ankle,' he said. I said: 'Break on, Leblond: Ali never gives in.' And he broke my ankle, and I got up on one foot, and pinned him. I said. 'You cannot hurt Ali. But he whom Ali grips, God forgets!' That is me!"

"Oh, I'm sure you'll win. I've betted on you."

"Good boy! What odds did they lay against me?"

"Very small."

"You're lying. They think I'm an old man. They laugh. Good, let them. And in the end, when they laugh on the other side of the face, I shall laugh, too—I shall laugh right into their eyes, and say: 'The old wolf still has teeth.' Do I look good?"

"You look like a champion, Ali, you really do."

Ali laughed, until the fat on his stomach bounced like a cat in a sack. "Ha-ha-ha! I surprised you, eh? . . . They think I'm going to fool about with this Greek, this Cypriot. No. I shall walk in—one, two, three; up with the legs, back with the head—dash him down, pick him up like a child, shake him like a kitten; then over my head, bim-bam, and pin him. Back again—forward with his head, under my arm with it, and *khaaa!* my old stranglehold, until his eyes pop out. Then I shall pick him up like a dumbbell, and hold him above my head, and say to the crowd: 'This is the man who thought he could beat Ali the Turk!' Then—"

An open door let in the shouting of a crowd. Legs Mabogany came through, bleeding from the nose, followed by the Black Strangler, who staggered as he walked. An attendant came in, and said:

"Ali!"

Ali put on a dressing gown of quilted red silk, thirty years old and eroded by moths. "Smart, eh? A woman gave me this in Vienna, in . . . I forget the date. . . ."



Adam whispered: "Give me your glass eye: it's madness to wrestle in one of those things."

"Rubbish! And let him see I have a blind side?"

"Give it to me, I tell you!"

"If you insist, then, take it." Ali slid out his left eye, and gave it to Adam, who put it in his waistcoat pocket. Then he strode, with slow dignity, out to the ringside, while through his head ran the cheerful rhythm of the *March of the Gladiators*, the tune to which the old wrestlers at the International Tournaments had strutted in glory round the arenas.

There was a roar of applause. Ali raised his hands to acknowledge it, when he saw Kraton, already in the ring, bowing and smiling. Ali grasped the ropes and swung himself up. There was a pause. A little trickle of clapping broke out; then laughter, which rose and swelled, pierced by high catcalls and shrill whistles. . . .

"Hooo! Laurel and 'Ardy!"

"Where d'you get them trousers?"

"Take yer whiskers off! We can't see yer!"

Somebody began to sing, in a good tenor voice: "It happened on the beach at Belly-Belly!"

Figler's friend, Lew, rose and shouted, in a voice trained in the market places of the earth: "Good old Ali! We remember you!"

Ali tore off his dressing gown, and threw it to Adam.

"Go on, laugh!" he cried.

They laughed.

Fabian shrieked into a megaphone: "Ladies and gentlemen! On my right, two hundred and forty pounds of bone, muscle, brain, and nerve, Kraton of Cyprus, contender for championship honors! . . . On my left—"

"Father Christmas!" said a voice; and there was another shout of laughter.

"Ali! the Terrible Turk, ex-heavyweight champion of the world, now making a sensational comeback—"

"Champion of wot world?" yelled a thin, Cockney voice.

"Lad-eez and gentlemen! The name of Ali the Terrible Turk was a household word at the beginning of the century—"

"Wot century?"

("That's what you get, if you get old without any money," said Lew to Figler.)

Fabian stepped back. Kraton and Ali went to their corners. Kra-

tion still smiled. It was best, he decided, to let it seem that this affair was an elaborate joke. Ali was as grim as death.

"Now don't forget—take it easy!" whispered Adam.

Ali replied: "I shall have pinned him within twenty seconds. Count twenty, slowly—"

The gong clanged.

The wrestlers went out into the ring.

Kration advanced with the grace of a dancer. Ali moved slowly, jaws clamped, chin down. They circled about each other, teinting. Then there was a sound like the crack of a whip. Before Ali's fat-clogged, time-laden muscles could co-ordinate in a counterattack, Kration had slapped him on the buttocks.

"Get 'im by the 'orns!" somebody shouted.

"Right," said Kration, and grabbed at Ali's mustache. But next moment, a grip like pincers closed on his wrist, a force like an earthquake twirled him round, and his hand went back over his head toward his shoulder blades.

Kration broke out into a sweat. It occurred to him that Ali was in savage earnest. He had not sufficient skill to break the hold. Resisting Ali's pressure with all his strength, he butted backwards with his head. The hard, round skull, padded with kinky black hair, jolted against Ali's jaw. The Turk snarled, and tried to knock Kration's feet from under him; but between himself and his opponent, his vast abdomen stood like a wall. Kration's head jerked back again. In Ali's nose, something like a lever in a pump, and bright red blood began to run on to his mustache.

Kration broke away, whirled round, and, in turning, struck Ali on the jaw with his forearm. It seemed to Ali that the Cypriot was swimming in a sea of red water reticulated with a network of dazzling light; and that the voice of this sea was laughter. But even as his brain wavered, his ancient instincts were sending him lumbering after Kration, while his consciousness automatically juggled with the logic of a hundred different forms of attack. . . .

*He's too fast. Waste no strength chasing! Get close and crush!* His huge right hand hooked Kration's neck. Kration's fingers, forked like a snake's tongue, flickered toward his eyes. Ali ducked. Kration's nails scratched his forehead. Then Ali had his right hand in an irresistible grip. Adam saw his back quiver.

"Flying mare!" screamed a woman's voice.

Ali heaved Kration off his feet by his right arm; stooped to throw

him over his shoulder; then stopped. The edge of his belt had cut him short. They stayed, for a moment, in this ignominious posture. Then Kration, wriggling like a python, caught Ali's throat between his biceps and forearm, twisted a leg between Ali's thighs, grunted, tugged; then writhed away as they fell. The Turk's body struck the mat with the dead thud of a falling tree. Something snapped: his belt had burst. Kration uttered a triumphant yell, and pulled it away; leaped back, and held it over his head.

Laughter roared through the spectators like a wind through trees. Ali was up, growling. Fabian took the belt from Kration's hands, muttering, as he did so: "Liven it up a bit, can't you, you two? Don't play about like kids in a bloody nursery! Come on, now!"

Kration evaded Ali's slashing right hand, threw himself back against the ropes, and fired himself across the ring like a stone from a catapult. His right shoulder struck Ali in the abdomen. Ali fell backwards, with a tremendous gasp, but even as he fell, rolled over with a grunt and caught Kration below the ribs in a scissorshold.

Kration felt like a man in a train smash, pinned by a fallen ceiling. He writhed, but Ali held fast. The crowd screamed. Kration breathed in short coughs—*Asssss . . . Asssss . . . Asssss*. He tensed all the iron muscles of his stomach. Ali still struggled for breath: every exhalation, blowing through the blood which still ran from his nose, splattered the mat with red drops. *Prup-aghhh . . . prup-aghhh, . . .* He realized that he could not hold Kration for more than another ten seconds. Cramp crawled in the muscles of his thighs.

Kration ground the heel of his hand into Ali's mouth, and broke loose; leaped high in the air, and came down backside first. Ali saw him coming, but could not move quickly enough. Kration's two hundred and forty pounds dropped, like a flour sack falling from a loft, on to Ali's chest. Wind rushed out—*Ahhhhhhhh!*—with a fine spray of blood. Darkness descended on the Turk; for perhaps one second, he became unconscious. His mind floundered up out of a darkness as deep and cold as Siberian midnight. He found himself struggling to his feet.

Adam's voice reached his ears as from an immense distance: "Careful, Ali, careful!" Kration was upon him again, on his blind side, and had caught him in a wristlock.

Ali's brain flickered and wavered like a candle flame in a draft. There was a countermove; something . . . something . . . he could not remember. He put out all his might, and caught one of the Cyp-

riot's wrists; grunted: "Hup!" like a coal heaver, and used his tremendous weight to spin Kration round and swing him off his feet. As Kration staggered, Ali caught one of his ankles; twirled him round, six inches off the mat, in the manner of an acrobatic dancer, then let go. The Cypriot fell on his face, kicking and heaving like a wounded leopard. "Ahail!" yelled Ali, springing forward as Kration rose to his hands and knees. "Wahol!"

"Nice work!" screamed Adam.

Ali had Kration in a headlock. Kration crouched, gathering his strength; then began to strain left and right, in spasmodic jerks. Blood from Ali's nose fell like rain on Kration's back. Both men were red to the waist, slippery with blood. Ali's grip was slipping: Kration was as hard to hold as a flapping sail in a raging wind. . . . Kration's head was free. Ali caught a glimpse of his face, purple, swollen, split by a grin of anger that displayed all his teeth, white as peeled almonds. Then Kration swung his left arm. His hard, flat palm struck Ali in the face: one of his nails scraped the surface of Ali's eye.

A blank, bleak horror came into the heart of the Turk. *My eye! My last eye! If I lose this eye, too!* Then he roared like a maddened lion, buried his fingers in the softer flesh above Kration's hips, lifted him above his head by sheer force, threw him across the ring, and followed him, growling unintelligible insults and spitting blood—

*Clang!* went the gong.

Ali groped his way back to his corner, and sat limply. Adam sponged him with cold water, adjusted his sash, and wiped the blood from his face.

"My eye," said Ali, "my eye!"

"It's badly scratched," said Adam.

Ali's eye was closing. The lids, dark and swollen, were creeping together to cover the blood-colored eyeball.

The crowd shouted. One voice screamed: "Carm on, Nelson! Carm on, whiskers!"

Ali sucked up a mouthful of water and, like a spouting whale, sprayed it toward the crowd. "Cowards!" he shouted. "Cowards!"

Figler muttered: "This is disgusting. Let's go."

Lew, shaken by emotion, did not answer, but raised his piercing voice and called to Ali: "Good work, Ali! I've not seen anything better since you beat Red Shreckhorn in Manchester!"

Ali called back: "Thank you for that!"

"Go easy, for God's sake, go easy," said Adam.

The gong sounded Kratton advanced, smiling To Ali, he looked like a man half formed out of red dust He thought: *If I do not get him within five minutes, this eye will close, and then I shall be a man fighting in the dark* This thought was indescribably terrifying The curtain of mist was darkening Now, by straining the muscles of his forehead and cheeks, and holding his mouth wide open, he could barely manage to see

A voice cried "Look out, Kratton! He's going to swallow you!" Another shouted. "Oo-er! Look at 'is whiskers! They're coming unstuck!"

Ali's mustache had, indeed, fallen into a ludicrous Nietzschean droop matted to a spiky fringe with congealing blood Kratton snarled, leaped in, struck Ali across the neck with a flailing arm, and seized his mustache. He tugged If the hair had not been slippery with the blood from Ali's nose, Kratton might have pulled it out But it slid through his fingers Ali weeping huge tears of pain, grasped blindly and caught the Cypriot by the biceps of his right arm The darkness had come He knew that if he relaxed that grip, he was lost. As Kratton jerked back Ali followed The Cypriot began to gasp with pain *Esss-hu esss-hu* Everything in Ali's body and soul focused in the five small points of his finger tips He was blind, now, utterly blind lost in a roaring, spinning ring dumb with agony, choked with blood, deafened with howls of derision and encouragement which seemed to have no end— and in this world of sickening pain, there was only one real thing, and that was the arm of his enemy, in which he was burying his fingers

They clung together, spinning round and round like two twigs in a whirlpool, the Cypriot groaning now, Ali silent He felt cold A ring post ground into his back He groped with his other hand and found nothing The noise of the crowd was becoming fainter, his face seemed to be swelling and swelling, while in his breast his heart thundered like horses galloping over a wooden bridge Something knocked his feet from the mat He fell, still clutching Kratton's arm The Cypriot said "For Christ's sake!" Ali replied "You feel my grip, eh?"

Voices were shouting "Stop the fight! Stop it!"

Out of his midnight Ali roared "Stop nothing! Ali never stops!"

Suddenly, he released Kratton's biceps, slid his hand down until it reached the wrist, where it shut like a bear trap, swung his other hand to the elbow The Cypriot's arm broke Ali heard his scream of pain,

but still held on. Kraton became limp. Ali held his eye open, with the first and second fingers of his free hand. He could see nothing except an interminable, fiery redness. Somebody tried to prize open his fingers, which still gripped Kraton's wrist. Ali struck out blindly. A voice said: "Stop! You've won! It's me, Adam!"

"By God," said Ali, "that Greek went down like bricks."

The crowd was delirious. Fabian said: "You certainly gave those sons of bitches their money's worth."

Adam led him back to the dressing room.

Ali found his voice: "Did you see how I beat him? Did you see how I broke him up? Did you see how I pulled him down? Did you see how his arm went? Did you see my grip? I could have beaten him in the first ten seconds, only I wanted the public to see a *fight*. Did you see my grip? What Ali grips, God forgets!"

"You were great, Ali."

"Now am I fat?"

"No, Ali."

"Now am I old?"

"No, Ali."

"Now have I no teeth?"

"Teeth like a tiger."

"Now can I wrestle?"

"Better than ever, Ali."

"Now am I undefeated?"

"Still undefeated, Ali."

Ali raised his head, brushed back his mustache, twirled it again to fine points, and said: "Nobody on God's earth ever beat me. Nobody ever will. Look at me. If he hadn't scratched my eye, I should be as right as rain."

"Have a rest, Ali."

"Close the windows," said Ali, "there's a devil of a cold wind."

The windows were already closed.

Ali muttered: "I wonder if my eye is badly damaged? Get me some boracic acid crystals and a little warm water——" He stopped abruptly and said: "Put your hand on my chest!"

Adam did so. In Ali's chest, he felt something rattling, like a loose plate in a racing engine.

Ali exclaimed, with an astounded expression: "The clock is stopping!"

"Nonsense, Ali! Rest."

Ali struck his vast belly with a colossal fist, and murmured: "What a meal for the worms!"

Those were the last words he ever uttered.

That night he died.

# THE BOAT RACE MURDER

---

by DAVID WINSER

*The appeal of The Boat Race Murder is two-fold first, it is a murder mystery with a clean cut and entirely satisfying solution; on top of this it is a flavorful inside story of a sport which few people have approached in fiction and then only in passing, as it were. The scene is the days preceding the Oxford-Cambridge boat race, that annual classic on the Thames which every Englishman follows with intense personal involvement, be he university man or not. The pre race pressure on the members of the rival crews is enormous, and it is this heavy atmosphere of strain which permeates and activates the story Mr. Winsor tells.*

FOR THE THREE WEEKS before the Boat Race the Oxford crew generally lives at Ranelagh. This costs quite a penny, though it is conveniently close to the boathouses, but the question of money doesn't much worry the rowing authorities. The reason for this is that rowing, like every other Oxford sport, is more or less entirely supported by the gate receipts of the Rugger club. So there we lived, in Edwardian comfort, and played croquet on the immaculate croquet lawns in the special croquet goloshes they give you and admired the



the boat. So, not for you or Oxford perhaps, but for those men who rowed in the crew, Jim's going was a real tragedy. Everyone knew that once they'd put in Davis, the dark-haired short-built *Isis* stroke, they'd leave him there. And Davis, who had plenty of guts and rowed as hard as he could, was hopelessly short in the water. There'd be hell to pay.

As for Jim, I knew a bit how he felt. I'd been in and out of the crew myself, because the *Isis* cox was at least as good as I was and knew the river even better. I wouldn't have been a bit surprised at anything Jim had done. But, as soon as the coaches told him, he'd frozen up completely. He hadn't said anything to them, which was stupid of him. They hadn't wanted to make the change; his own carelessness, which we knew was designed to save himself for one of those terrific races he'd row, looked sloppy. The coaches were worried, and the rowing correspondents started saying Oxford was stale. Hence the fizz, and hence Davis.

And all Jim said, in front of the coaches, he said to me, "Come on, Peter," he said. "I'm going to scare the Alacrity bird."

So Jon and I took 'him back to Ranelagh in my small M.G. and dropped him near the Alacrity bird's usual haunt; the bird was a crane which flew when you chased it. Then I let Jon drive the car into its garage. He wasn't allowed his car or his pipe during the last six weeks of training, and he needed a few luxuries like that. He joined me again before I reached the main house and we walked in together.

"Your petrol's low," he said. He didn't know about Jim yet but he sounded depressed, as if he knew something of the sort was afoot.

"There's enough for tomorrow, isn't there?"

"Provided the gauge is right, you've got half a gallon."

"That's all right then. Don't worry about the outing, Jon. Fizz night tonight."

Somewhere outside in the garden poor Jim Matthews was walking. I think the Alacrity bird was only an excuse because he wanted to be by himself. I was sorry for Jim. He'd have one more outing, with Davis rowing two, and then he'd go.

Next day, as might be expected after a fizz night, everything went wrong. To begin with I left it too late to get down to the river in time, thinking I'd take my car. I was the only one of the crew allowed to go into shops, because the others were thought to be especially susceptible to flu at that stage of training, so I used to take my car with me and go out shopping after the outing. But that morning I found there

wasn't any petrol after all, so I had to run all the way across the polo grounds. They were just getting the boat out when I came, with a little boy doing my work. I pushed him aside without saying thanks and behaved in a thoroughly bad manner. And then Davis, who was pardonably nervous, paddled on hard when I told him to touch her gently and the boat just missed drifting on to a buoy. Jim Matthews, like everyone else, sat there doing nothing, while I swore. The only incident of interest was that Jon and Harry swore back, being apparently by now aware that Davis was coming up to stroke. Davis rowed too fast. They got tired, and the coaches would accuse them of bucketing, and the boat would start stopping. I didn't blame them for swearing. I swore too.

The coach picked up his megaphone. "Ready, cox?" he asked. He didn't ask it out of kindness.

I said Yes.

"Paddle on down to the Eyot," he said. "Jim, make them work it up a bit once or twice."

Now the Eyot is a good fifteen minutes' paddle from the boat-houses, and Jim, I suppose because it was his last time at stroke, took them along really hard. When he worked it up he worked it right up, nearly to forty, and he kept it there for a full minute. Then, not so long afterward, he did it again. And to end up with he put in a terrific burst of rowing. All the time he was steady, swinging them easily along. I could see the great green holes in the water Jon and Harry made. The boat traveled. I wondered whether the coaches were going to change their mind. No one will know that now, not even Jim. I'd noticed Davis' blade wasn't coming through very well at the end of the paddle, but I hadn't thought anything else about it. When we'd eased he leaned forward over his oar and stayed there, but again this wasn't very unusual; it had been about as hard work as a paddle like that can be. After a rest I gave the order to come half forward, because we were going to do a rowing start. But Davis didn't move.

"Half forward, two!" I said, still angrily.

Then apparently bow leaned forward and touched him, because his body slumped forward, slid over the gunnel, and went into the water. I don't know when he died, but he was dead when the launch reached him. Luckily Dr. Jeffreys was on the spot, waiting to see what difference the change would make. Well, he'd seen.

If I'd ever doubted whether the coaches deserved their positions, and during training you doubt most things, I was all wrong. They

took the launch on up to the London University boathouse, where no one ever went during the mornings, got Solly's car round there, put Davis' body in it, brought it to Ranelagh without either the crew or the press or the secretary of Ranelagh seeing, and before lunch they'd got the whole crew together, and Dr. Joe Jeffreys was talking to them. One of the chief duties of the coaches was to keep the crew feeling happy.

"Well," said Joe, "you all saw what happened. Poor young Davis died of heart failure. I know how you feel, and you know how I feel. But there's one thing you ought to understand clearly. The reason he died was that his heart was dicky before he started. I never tested it, but I know it was, because your heart doesn't fail at the end of a paddle unless it *is* dicky. And I know all your hearts are damn sound, because I *did* test them. Just to make sure I'm going to test them again today."

And he did, and he was quite right; there was nothing wrong with any of the toughs.

But in the middle, when Jon had just gone out and Solly, Joe and I were alone in the room, Joe suddenly stopped.

"I *did* test Davis' heart," he said.

Well, Solly made a rather typical crack about the value of tests, but apparently this was a pretty sound test. Anyway we went and rang up the police.

"That kid was murdered," said Joe. I suppose Solly thought he was just humoring him. Another of the duties of coaches is to keep the other coaches feeling happy. Those last weeks of training are the devil all round

It was rather typical of the way the Boat Race gets a grip on people that the crew went out that afternoon. Solly insisted he was only doing it to allay any suspicion about Davis in the minds of the press. But anyway the boat went out, and, with Jim stroking beautifully, they rowed the best two minutes they'd ever done, clearing their wash by yards at thirty-six. When Jim was there, that was as good a crew as any.

The police were around when we got back, but that didn't bother us much. You see, we all knew each other pretty well; you don't have murderers rowing with you. Murderers are professionals, probably, as they've worked with their hands. Anyway, you don't.

Well, they found out what had killed Davis. We'll call it diphenyl tyrosine; Jim and I knew what its real name was because we happened to be medical students. Joe Jeffreys knew it too, of course. The

odd thing about it is that it's a component of quite a common patent medicine. That's all right, because it only quickens up your heart for a day or so; but when you start with a quickened heart and then row hard in a Boat Race crew your heart gets very quick indeed, so quick that it doesn't really function adequately. It starts to jump about a bit, and then it starts to fibrillate, to quiver all over in rather a useless way. Then, if it's the ventricle fibrillating, you die. Davis had plenty of guts; he went on just as long as his heart did. He had the guts of a good stroke, but he wasn't Jim Matthews. I was sorry for Davis, but, for the crew's sake, I was glad Jim was safe. The funny thing was that whoever killed Davis must have known that he'd got guts.

Now they started in on a long investigation of the crew's movements during the day before. It had to be the day before because they'd got a very interesting bit of evidence. A man had come into a chemist's in Putney and he'd asked for this patent medicine, as no doubt men did every day. He'd worn a mackintosh and an old hat.

But underneath the mackintosh the chemist had noticed he was wearing those queer white blanket trousers the crews wear out of the boat.

The policeman who was doing the detective work then had two very frustrating conversations which he described to us with fair relish.

He'd asked the chemist if the purchaser in the white trousers had been a big man. The chemist said, "Yes.

"Bigger than me?"

"Well, maybe."

"Sure he wasn't fairly small?"

The chemist considered. "Well," he said, "you might call him small."

"Could you draw a line against the wall showing just his height?"

The chemist stepped forward confidently, stopped, tried to think, and then said:—

"No. Not exactly, somehow."

"What color was his hair then?"

"Oh," said the chemist, "if I noticed the color of all my customers' hair I'd be in a pretty state." He became a little irritable. "All I know is," he said, "he had white trousers on."

The other conversation was the sequel to the discovery that Jon and I brought my car back when the rest of the crew came in. They wanted to find if anyone went *out* of Ranelagh in a car like mine.

The detective people went to the porters at the two gates. "Did you see a small black sports car go out of the grounds?" they asked. "After 5:30."

Those were the days when Hornets and M.G.s were as common as sneezing. One porter said he'd seen four, color unnoticed; the other had seen seven, three of them black or dark brown.

"Well," said the fellows, "did you see any coming back again?"

"Those seven," said the porter who wasn't color-blind, "was going both ways." He wasn't shaken from this peculiar belief. In short, they didn't get any change out of porters or chemists. Someone in the crew *did* buy this patent medicine and someone *could* have gone out in my car. They never found the bottle, of course. There were hundreds of ways to get rid of it—you might put it down the lavatory and pull the plug, for instance. It was one of those small bottles. You'll be guessing its name in a minute but, luckily, you'll guess wrong.

Then, also in front of me, someone realized that if the chemist had been at all an efficient man he'd have made the fellow in the mackintosh sign for the medicine, simply because, technically, it was poison if you had a whole bottleful. So one of them went off to find out if the chemist was as efficient as all that, and the other started to find out where we'd all been.

Now the curious thing about all this investigation was that it had taken a very short time. It was still only the day after the murder. As soon as they knew it was murder they'd started thinking about heart drugs, the sort you might mix up in someone's milk as they went to bed, or drop in a glass of fizz, so they thought of diphenyl tyrosine and, sure enough, there it was when they did an autopsy on Davis. No one knew when he'd taken it; but they decided it must have been in his fizz. Personally the mechanism of this seems pretty difficult to me, but that's what they said. I suppose they'd had experience of that sort of thing. Anyway he'd certainly not have been looking out for it; very few people expect to be poisoned in the middle of a fizz night. They seemed so certain about it all, quite rightly as it turned out, that we didn't like to doubt their word. So we were all terribly efficient when it came to describing our movements.

They only wanted to know about the time between 5:30, when we all came back from the outing, and six. The chemist said the purchaser in the white trousers had come in at about 5:45, and the reason he knew was that it was a quarter of an hour before he closed at six, and the fact that no other customers had come in afterward had

made him think he'd been a sap not to close quarter of an hour earlier. This looked pretty good evidence to me, and the detective fellows liked it a lot.

Most of the crew had been together from 5:30 till six, all in the big games room. Jon, Jim and I hadn't been there at first. We knew where Jim was, outside with the Alacrity bird. The three of us got back from the outing a little later than the rest of them because of that talk with the coaches, and Jim had come into the house again at ten to six. We were sure of that, or very nearly sure, because by six o'clock, when the news came on, he'd played a complete game of ping-pong with Ronnie. That left quarter of an hour of Jim unaccounted for.

Jon said he'd been in his room all the time till six, when he came down for the news.

I said I hadn't been in the games room at all. First of all I'd done the crossword and then I'd been signing autographs for the crew.

"How do you mean 'for the crew'?" one of them asked.

I told him that the rest of them could never be bothered to sign autograph books. All the coxes after Peter Bryan's time had had to forge the signatures of everyone else; it was one of their duties. So long as you had two or three different nibs and patience you could make a very good job of it indeed.

"Oh," they said, laughing. "That's dangerous."

I said not so dangerous as they thought.

Well, one of the detectives walked to the chemist's and back. It took twenty-five minutes, walking hard. That meant that Jon or I could have gone on our feet or by car, while Jim could only have gone by car. On his way there he met the detective who'd been to see if anyone signed. Someone had, all right, but it was probably not his name. *A. G. Gallimage*, someone had written

They went to work on this clue, rather ingeniously. The detective said he wanted a genuine autograph and went round to each member of the crew with some sentimental story about his daughter being ill in bed and only needing a genuine autograph to recover. It's wonderful what rowing men will swallow. Jim was the only one who made a fuss. He was playing ping-pong again and he said, as rudely as usual:—

"The cox can forge mine."

The detective said he knew that. His daughter wanted a real one. After that Jim signed, a bit grudgingly; and went on playing.

He signed in a writing very like Gallimage's.

This more or less meant Jim or me. I forgot to say that they'd checked up on Jon and found that a maid had seen him in his room between 5:40 and 5:50. She didn't say so, but I expect he went up there for a smoke. He thought it improved *his* rowing but nobody else's. So Jim and I were left, and the signature did very well for either of us. It was typical of the effect of the Boat Race atmosphere that the detectives came and asked Solly if they could arrest both of us. I know they did because I was in the room at the time.

"Would you mind if we arrested Matthews and your cox?" they asked.

"Yes, old chap," said Solly. "We can get another cox, but we haven't any more strokes. Leave them both if you can."

The detective looked serious. "Evidence is bad," he said.

Solly leaned back in his chair. "Trot it out," he said. "The cox and I will spoil it. The cox does the crossword in half an hour every morning."

"Twenty-five minutes with Jon," I said. "That was two days ago."

Then I shut up.

The detective trotted out the evidence. At the end I pointed out a flaw. It wasn't half as hard as the *Times* crossword, let alone Torquemada.

"But if Jim went," I said, "he must have used the car."

"Yes."

"But there wasn't any petrol in the car."

"Sure?"

"Quite sure. You see, Jon and I both saw the gauge reading half a gallon. Only next morning it still read half a gallon and there wasn't any petrol in her. It foxed me completely."

"It certainly did," said Solly.

"You realize what you're saying?" asked the detective.

"No," I said.

"If Jim Matthews didn't take your car, then someone walked to the shop. That means you walked, because Jim didn't have time."

"He could have run," I said.

"Ah," said the detective. "That's where you're wrong. *He wasn't out of breath.*"

I suppose I looked pretty shaken by this bit of information, because Solly patted me on the back in a very kindly way. "That's all right," he said. "It'll turn out not to have been either of you. Glad you remembered about the petrol."

I was a good deal comforted by this. "Well," I said, "that fellow

who coxes the *Isis* is a damn fine cox, and I've got one Blue already. I know we'll win. But I wish they had wireless sets in prison."

"We'll try and let you know all about it," said the detective. This seemed to me a pretty decent way to speak to a murderer.

That isn't all, and it won't be all either. Oxford won, of course, with one of Jim's beautifully timed spurts. He couldn't have made it without Harry and Jon and they couldn't have made it if he hadn't been there, swinging them along so steadily and easily that you'd have thought they were paddling. That is, until you saw how the boat moved.

Furthermore those detectives forgot one thing. Perhaps you saw what it was. Of course my petrol gauge is a bit odd; they can easily test it and show *that it sticks on the half-gallon mark*.

I'm sorry for Jim. I wish it hadn't happened. To be honest, I don't see any other way we could have won; but even Jim, who was a casual ambitious fellow, didn't mean to pay that price for it. He thought Davis would feel ill and give up in the middle of the paddle. But Davis went on rowing till his heart stopped.



# A FULL DAY'S HUNTING

from

WAR AND PEACE

by LEO TOLSTOY

(1869)

*In the interludes between battles in the protracted war against Napoleon, Nikolay Rostov, one of the three young men who are the heroes of War and Peace, comes home to enjoy his family, his friends, his old pleasures. In the episode described here, he goes to his family's country place, Otradnoe, with the hope of doing some hunting—and the hospitality of circumstance smiles lavishly on him. As a rule it is far easier for a writer to make a "bad person" interesting than it is to make a "good person" interesting, far easier to drive home the full impact of life's tragic passages than its moments of great happiness. As this excerpt illustrates, one of the respects in which Tolstoy stands almost alone is his ability to communicate the upwelling joy of living, the moments when life is almost too good to be true.*

WINTER WEATHER was already setting in, the morning frosts hardened the earth drenched by the autumn rains. Already the grass was full of tufts, and stood out bright green against the patches of brown winter cornland trodden by the cattle, and the pale yellow stubble of the summer cornfields, and the reddish strips of buckwheat. The uplands and copses, which at the end of August had still been green islands among the black fields plowed ready for winter corn, and the stubble had become golden and lurid red islands in a sea of bright green autumn crops. The gray hare had already half changed its coat, the foxes' cubs were beginning to leave their parents, and the young wolves were bigger than dogs. It was the best time of the year for the chase. The dogs of an ardent young

sportsman like Rostov were just about coming into fit state for hunting, so at a common council of the huntsmen it was decided to give the dogs three days' rest, and on the 16th of September to go off on a hunting expedition, beginning with Dubravy, where there was a litter of wolves that had never been hunted.

Such was the position of affairs on the 14th of September.

All that day the dogs were kept at home. It was keen and frosty weather, but toward evening the sky clouded over and it began to thaw. On the morning of the 15th of September when young Rostov in his dressing gown looked out the window he saw a morning which was all the heart could desire for hunting. It looked as though the sky were melting and, without the slightest wind, sinking down upon the earth. The only movement in the air was the soft downward motion of microscopic drops of moisture or mist. The bare twigs in the garden were hung with transparent drops which dripped on to the freshly fallen leaves. The earth in the kitchen garden had a gleaming, wet, black look like the center of a poppy, and at a short distance away it melted off into the damp, dim veil of fog.

Nikolay went out onto the wet and muddy steps. There was a smell of decaying leaves and dogs. The broad-backed, black and tan bitch Milka, with her big, prominent black eyes, caught sight of her master, got up, stretched out her hind legs, lay down like a hare, then suddenly jumped up and licked him right on his nose and mustache. Another harrier, catching sight of his master from the bright-colored path, arched its back, darted headlong to the steps, and, lifting its tail, rubbed itself against Nikolay's legs.

"O, hoy!" He heard at that moment the inimitable hunting halloo which unites the deepest bass and the shrillest tenor notes. And round the corner came the huntsman and whipper-in, Danilo, a gray, wrinkled man, with his hair cropped round in the Ukrainian fashion. He held a bent whip in his hand, and his face had that expression of independence and scorn for everything in the world which is only to be seen in huntsmen. He took off his Circassian cap to his master and looked scornfully at him. That scorn was not offensive to his master. Nikolay knew that this Danilo, disdainful of all, and superior to everything, was still his man and his huntsman.

"Danilo," said Nikolay, at the sight of this hunting weather, those dogs, and the huntsman, feeling shyly that he was being carried away by that irresistible sporting passion in which a man forgets all his previous intentions, like a man in love at the sight of his mistress.

"What is your bidding, your excellency?" asked a bass voice fit for a head deacon and hoarse from hallooming, and a pair of flashing

black eyes glanced up from under their brows at the silent young master. Surely you can't resist it? those two eyes seemed to be asking.

"It's a good day, eh? Just right for riding and hunting, eh?" said Nikolay, scratching Milka behind the ears.

Danilo winked and made no reply.

"I sent Uvarka out to listen at daybreak," his bass boomed out after a moment's silence. "He brought word *she's moved* into the Otradnoe enclosure; there was howling there." ("She's moved" meant that the mother wolf, of whom both knew, had moved with her cubs into the Otradnoe copse, which was a small hunting preserve about two versts away)

"Shouldn't we go, eh?" said Nikolay. "Come to me with Uvarka."

"As you desire."

"Then put off feeding them."

"Yes, sir!"

Five minutes later Danilo and Uvarka were standing in Nikolay's big study. Although Danilo was not tall, to see him in a room gave one an impression such as one has on seeing a horse or bear standing on the floor among the furniture and surroundings of human life. Danilo felt this himself, and as usual he kept close to the door and tried to speak more softly, and not to move for fear of causing some breakage in the master's apartments. He did his utmost to get everything said quickly so as to get as soon as might be out into the open again, from under a ceiling out under the sky.

After making inquiries and extracting from Danilo an admission that the dogs were fit (Danilo himself was longing to go), Nikolay told them to have the horses saddled. But just as Danilo was about to go, Natasha, wrapped in a big shawl of her old nurse's, ran into the room, not yet dressed, and her hair in disorder. Petya ran in with her.

"Are you going?" said Natasha. "I knew you would! Sonya said you weren't going. I knew that on such a day you couldn't help going!"

"Yes, we're going," Nikolay answered reluctantly. As he meant to attempt serious hunting he did not want to take Natasha and Petya. "We are going, but only wolf-hunting; it will be dull for you."

"You know that it's the greatest of my pleasures," said Natasha. "It's too bad—he's going himself, has ordered the horses out and not a word to us."

"No hindrance bars a Russian's path!" declaimed Petya; "let's go!"

"But you mustn't, you know; mama said you were not to," said Nikolay to Natasha.

"No, I'm going, I must go," said Natasha stoutly. "Danilo, bid them saddle my horse, and tell Mihailo to come with my leash," she said to the huntsman.

Simply to be in a room seemed irksome and unfitting to Danilo, but to have anything to do with a young lady he felt to be utterly impossible. He cast down his eyes and made haste to get away, making as though it were no affair of his and trying to avoid accidentally doing some hurt to the young lady.

The old count, whose hunting establishment had always been kept up on a large scale, had now handed it all over to his son's care, but on that day, the 15th of September, being in excellent spirits he prepared to join the expedition. Within an hour the whole party was before the porch. When Natasha and Petya said something to Nikolay he walked by them with a stern and serious air, betokening that he had no time to waste on trifles. He looked over everything to do with the hunt, sent a pack of hounds and huntsmen on ahead to cut off the wolf from behind, got on his chestnut Don horse, and, whistling to the dogs of his leash, set off across the threshing floor to the field leading to the Otradnoe preserve. The old count's horse, a sorrel gelding with a white mane and tail, called Viflyanka, was led by the count's groom; he was himself to drive straight in a light gig to the spot fixed for him to stand.

Fifty-four hounds were led out under the charge of six whippers-in and grooms. Of huntsmen, properly speaking, there were taking part in the hunt eight men besides the members of the family, and more than forty greyhounds ran behind them, so with the hounds in leashes there were about a hundred and thirty dogs and twenty persons on horseback.

Every dog knew its master and its call. Every man in the hunt knew his task, his place, and the part assigned him. As soon as they had passed beyond the fence, they all moved without noise or talk, lengthening out along the road and the field to the Otradnoe forest.

The horses stepped over the field as over a soft carpet, splashing now and then into pools as they crossed the road. The foggy sky still seemed falling imperceptibly and regularly down on the earth; the air was still and warm, and there was no sound but now and then the whistle of a huntsman, the snort of a horse, the clack of a whip, or the whine of a dog who had dropped out of his place. When they had

gone a verst, five more horsemen accompanied by dogs appeared out of the mist to meet the Rostovs. The foremost of them was a fresh, handsome old man with large gray mustaches.

"Good day, Uncle," said Nikolay as the old man rode up to him.

"All's well and march! . . . I was sure of it," began the man addressed as Uncle. He was not really the Rostovs' uncle, but a distant relative who had a small property in their neighborhood.

"I was sure you couldn't resist it, and a good thing you have come out. All's well and quick march." (This was the uncle's favorite saying.) "You had better attack the preserve at once, for my Girtchil brought me word that the Ilagins are out with their hounds at Korniky; they'll snatch the litter right under your noses."

"That's where I'm going. Shall we join the packs?" asked Nikolay.

The hounds were joined into one pack, and the uncle and Nikolay rode on side by side.

Natasha, muffled up in a shawl which did not hide her eager face and shining eyes, galloped up to them, accompanied by Petya, who kept beside her, and Mihailo, the huntsman and groom, who had been told to look after her. Petya was laughing and switching and pulling his horse. Natasha sat her raven Arabtchick with grace and confidence and controlled him with an easy and steady hand.

The uncle looked with disapproval at Petya and Natasha. He did not like a mixture of frivolity with the serious business of the hunt.

"Good day, Uncle; we're coming to the hunt too!" shouted Petya.

"Good day, good day, and mind you don't ride down the dogs," said the uncle sternly.

"Nikolenka, what a delightful dog Trunila is! He knew me," said Natasha of her favorite dog.

In the first place, Trunila's not a dog, but a wolfhound, thought Nikolay. He glanced at his sister, trying to make her feel the distance that lay between them at that moment. Natasha understood it.

"Don't imagine we shall get in anybody's way, Uncle," said Natasha. "We'll stay in our right place and not stir from it."

"And you'll do well, little countess," said the uncle. "Only don't fall off your horse," he added, "or you'd never get on again—all's well, quick march!"

The Otradnoe preserve came into sight, an oasis of greenness, two hundred and fifty yards away. Rostov, settling finally with the uncle from what point to set the dogs on, pointed out to Natasha the place where she was to stand, a place where there was no chance of anything running out, and went round to close in from behind above the ravine.

"Now, nephew, you're on the track of an old wolf," said the uncle; "mind he doesn't give you the slip."

"That's as it happens," answered Rostov. "Karay, hey!" he shouted, replying to the uncle's warning by this call to his dog. Karay was an old, misshapen, muddy-colored hound, famous for attacking an old wolf unaided. All took their places.

The old count, who knew his son's ardor in the hunt, hurried to avoid being late, and the whippers-in had hardly reached the place when Count Ilya Andreitch, with a cheerful face and flushed and quivering cheeks, drove up with his pair of raven horses, over the green field to the place left for him. Straightening his fur coat and putting on his hunting appurtenances, he mounted his sleek, well-fed, quiet, good-humored Viflyanka, who was turning gray like himself. The horses with the gig were sent back. Count Ilya Andreitch, though he was at heart no sportsman, knew well all the rules of sport. He rode into the edge of the thicket of bushes behind which he was standing, picked up the reins, settled himself at his ease in the saddle, and, feeling that he was ready, looked about him smiling.

Near him stood his valet, Semyon Tchekmar, a veteran horseman, though now heavy in the saddle. Tchekmar held on a leash three wolfhounds of a special breed, spirited hounds, though they too had grown fat like their master and his horse. Two other keen old dogs were lying beside them not in a leash. A hundred paces farther in the edge of the copse stood another groom of the count's, Mitka, a reckless rider and passionate sportsman.

The count had followed the old custom of drinking before hunting a silver goblet of spiced brandy; he had had a slight lunch and after that half a bottle of his favorite Bordeaux. Count Ilya Andreitch was rather flushed from the wine and the drive; his eyes, covered by moisture, were particularly bright, and, sitting in the saddle wrapped up in his fur coat, he looked like a baby taken out for a drive.

After seeing to his duties, Tchekmar, with his thin face and sunken cheeks, looked toward his master, with whom he had lived on the best of terms for thirty years. Perceiving that he was in a genial humor, he anticipated a pleasant chat. A third person rode circumspectly—he had no doubt been cautioned—out of the wood and stood still behind the count. This personage was a gray-bearded old man, wearing a woman's gown and a high, peaked cap. It was the buffoon, Nastasya Ivanovna.

"Well, Nastasya Ivanovna," whispered the count, winking at him, "you only scare off the game, and Danilo will give it to you."

"I wasn't born yesterday," said Nastasya Ivanovna.

"Sh!" hissed the count, and he turned to Semyon. "Have you seen Natalya Ilyinitchna?" he asked Semyon. "Where is she?"

"Her honor's with Pyotr Ilyitch, behind the high grass at Zharvry," answered Semyon, smiling. "Though she is a lady, she has a great love for the chase."

"And you wonder at her riding, Semyon, eh?" said the count, "for a man even it wouldn't be amiss!"

"Who wouldn't wonder! So daring, so smart!"

"And where's Nikolasha? Above the Lyadovsky upland, eh?" the count asked, still in a whisper.

"Yes, sir. His honor knows where he had best stand. He knows the ins and outs of hunting so that Danilo and I are sometimes quite astonished at him," said Semyon, who knew how to please his master.

"He's a good, clever sportsman, eh? And what do you say to his riding, eh?"

"A perfect picture he is! How he drove the fox out of the Zavarzinsky thicket the other day. He galloped down from the ravine, it was a sight—the horse worth a thousand rubles, and the rider beyond all price. Yes, you would have to look a long while to find his match!"

"To look a long while . . ." repeated the count, obviously regretting that Semyon's praises had come to so speedy a termination. "A long while," he repeated, turning back the skirt of his coat and looking for his snuffbox.

"The other day they were coming out from Mass in all their glory, Mihail Sidoritch . . ." Semyon stopped short, hearing distinctly in the still air the rush of the hounds, with no more than two or three dogs giving tongue. With his head on one side, he listened, shaking a warning finger at his master. "They're on the scent of the litter . . ." he whispered; "they have gone straight toward Lyadovsky upland."

The count, with a smile still lingering on his face, looked straight before him along the path and did not take a pinch from the snuffbox he held in his hand. The hounds' cry was followed by the bass note of the hunting cry for a wolf sounded on Danilo's horn. The pack joined the first three dogs, and the voices of the hounds could be heard in full cry with the peculiar note which serves to betoken that they are after a wolf. The whippers-in were not now hallooing but urging on the hounds with cries of "Loo! loo! loo!" and above all the voices rose the voice of Danilo, passing from a deep note to piercing shrillness. Danilo's voice seemed to fill the whole forest, to pierce beyond it and echo far away in the open country.

After listening for a few seconds in silence, the count and his groom felt certain that the hounds had divided into two packs: one, the larger, was going off into the distance, in particularly hot cry; the other part of the pack was moving along the forest past the count, and it was with this pack that Danilo's voice was heard urging the dogs on. The sounds from both packs melted into unison and broke apart again, but both were getting farther away. Semyon sighed and stooped down to straighten the leash, in which a young dog had caught his leg. The count too sighed, and noticing the snuffbox in his hand, he opened it and took a pinch.

"Back!" cried Semyon to the dog, which had poked out beyond the bushes. The count started and dropped the snuffbox. Nastasya Ivanovna got off his horse and began picking it up.

The count and Semyon watched him. All of a sudden, as so often happens, the sound of the hunt was in an instant close at hand, as though the baying dogs and Danilo's cries were just upon them.

The count looked round, and on the right he saw Mitka, who was staring at the count with eyes starting out of his head. Lifting his cap, he pointed in front to the other side.

"Look out!" he shouted in a voice that showed the words had long been fretting him to be uttered. And, letting go the dogs, he galloped toward the count.

The count and Semyon galloped out of the bushes, and on their left they saw a wolf. With a soft, rolling gait it moved at a slow amble farther to their left into the very thicket in which they had been standing. The angry dogs whined and, pulling themselves free from the leash, flew by the horses' hoofs after the wolf.

The wolf paused in his flight; awkwardly, like a man with a quinsy he turned his heavy-browed head toward the dogs and, still with the same soft, rolling gait, gave one bound and a second and, waving its tail, disappeared into the bushes. At the same instant, with a cry like a wail, there sprang desperately out of the thicket opposite one hound, then a second and a third, and all the pack flew across the open ground toward the very spot where the wolf had vanished. The bushes were parted behind the dogs, and Danilo's brown horse, dark with sweat, emerged from them. On its long back Danilo sat perched up and swaying forward. He had no cap on his gray hair, which fluttered in disorder above his red, perspiring face.

"Loo! loo! loo!" he was shouting. When he caught sight of the count, there was a flash like lightning in his eyes.

"B——!" he shouted, using a brutally coarse term of abuse and menacing the count with his lifted whip. "Let the wolf slip! Sports-



men indeed!" And as though scorning to waste more words on the confused and frightened count, he lashed the moist and heavy sides of his brown gelding with all the fury that had been ready for the count and flew off after the dogs. The count stood like a man who has been thrashed, looking about him and trying to smile and call for Semyon to sympathize with his plight. But Semyon was not there; he had galloped round to cut the wolf off from the forest. The greyhounds, too, were running to and fro on both sides. But the wolf got off into the bushes, and not one of the party succeeded in coming across him.

Nikolay Rostov was standing meanwhile at his post waiting for the wolf. He was aware of what must be taking place within the copse from the rush of the pack coming closer and going farther away, from the cries of the dogs, whose notes were familiar to him, from the nearness, and then greater remoteness, and sudden raising of the voices of the huntsmen. He knew that there were both young and old wolves in the enclosure. He knew the hounds had divided into two packs, that in one place they were close on the wolf, and that something had gone wrong. Every second he expected the wolf on his side. He made a thousand different suppositions of how and at what spot the wolf would run out, and how he would set upon it. Hope was succeeded by despair. Several times he prayed to God that the wolf would rush out upon him. He prayed with that feeling of passion and compunction with which men pray in moments of intense emotion due to trivial causes. "Why, what is it to Thee," he said to God, "to do this for me? I know Thou art great and that it's a sin to pray to Thee about this, but for God's sake do make the old wolf come out upon me, and make Karay fix his teeth in his throat and finish him before the eyes of 'Uncle,' who is looking this way." A thousand times over in that half-hour, with intent, strained, and uneasy eyes Rostov scanned the thickets at the edge of the copse, with two scraggy oaks standing up above the undergrowth of aspen, and the ravine with its overhanging bank, and "Uncle's" cap peering out from behind a bush on the right. No, that happiness is not to be, thought Rostov. Yet what would it cost Him! It's not to be! I'm always unlucky, at cards, in war, and everything. Austerlitz and Dolohov flashed in distinct but rapid succession through his imagination. Only once in my life to kill an old wolf; I ask for nothing beyond! he thought, straining eyes and ears, looking from left to right, and back again, and listening to the slightest fluctuations in the sounds of the dogs.

He looked again to the right and saw something running across the

open ground toward him. No, it can't be! thought Rostov, taking a deep breath, as a man does at the coming of what he has long been hoping for. The greatest piece of luck had come to him, and so simply, without noise, or flourish, or display to signalize it. Rostov could not believe his eyes, and this uncertainty lasted more than a second. The wolf was running forward; he leaped clumsily over a rut that lay across his path.

It was an old wolf with a gray back and full, reddish belly. He was running without haste, plainly feeling secure of being unseen. Rostov held his breath and looked round at the dogs. They were lying and standing about, not seeing the wolf and quite unaware of him. Old Karay had his head turned round and was angrily searching for a flea, snapping his yellow teeth on his haunches.

"Loo! loo! loo!" Rostov whispered, pouting out his lips. The dogs leaped up, jingling the iron rings of the leashes, and pricked up their ears. Karay scratched his hind leg and got up, pricking up his ears and wagging his tail, on which there were hanging matted locks of his coat.

Loose them? or not loose them? Nikolay said to himself as the wolf moved away from the copse toward him. All at once the whole physiognomy of the wolf was transformed. He started, seeing—probably for the first time—human eyes fixed upon him, and, turning his head a little toward Rostov, stood still, in doubt whether to go back or forward. Ay! Never mind, forward! . . . the wolf seemed to be saying to himself, and he pushed on ahead, without looking round, softly and not rapidly, with an easy but resolute movement.

"Loo! loo!" Nikolay cried in a voice not his own, and of its own accord his gallant horse galloped at breakneck pace downhill and leaped over the watercourse to cut off the wolf's retreat; the hounds dashed on even more swiftly, overtaking it.

Nikolay did not hear his own cry; he had no consciousness of galloping; he saw neither the dogs nor the ground over which he galloped. He saw nothing but the wolf, which, quickening its pace, was bounding in the same direction across the glade. Foremost of the hounds was the black and tan, broad-backed bitch, Milka, and she was getting close upon him. But the wolf turned a sidelong glance upon her, and instead of flying at him, as she always had done, Milka suddenly stopped short, her forelegs held stiffly before her and her tail in the air.

"Loo! loo! loo!" shouted Nikolay.

The red hound, Lyubima, darted forward from behind Milka,

dashed headlong at the wolf, and got hold of him by the hind leg, but in the same second bounded away on the other side in terror. The wolf crouched, gnashed its teeth, rose again, and bounded forward, followed at a couple of yards' distance by all the dogs: they did not try to get closer.

He'll get away! No, it's impossible! thought Nikolay, still shouting in a husky voice.

"Karay! Loo! loo!" he kept shouting, looking for the old hound, who was his one hope now.

Karay, straining his old muscles to the utmost and watching the wolf intently, was bounding clumsily away from the beast, to cut across his path in front of him. But it was plain from the swiftness of the wolf's course and the slowness of the hounds that Karay was out in his reckoning. Nikolay saw the copse not far now ahead of him. If once the wolf reached it, he would escape to a certainty. But in front dogs and men came into sight, dashing almost straight toward the wolf. There was still hope. A long, young hound, not one of the Rostovs'—Nikolay did not recognize him—flew from in front straight at the wolf and knocked him over. The wolf got up again with a surprising rapidity and flew at the young hound, his teeth clacked, and the hound, covered with blood from a gash in his side, thrust its head in the earth, squealing shrilly.

"Karay! old man!" Nikolay wailed.

The old dog, with the tufts of matted hair quivering on his haunches, had succeeded, thanks to the delay, in cutting across the wolf's line of advance and was now five paces in front of him. The wolf stole a glance at Karay, as though aware of his danger, and tucking his tail farther between his legs, he quickened his pace. But then—Nikolay could only see that something was happening with Karay—the hound had dashed instantly at the wolf and had rolled in a struggling heap with him into the watercourse before them.

The moment when Nikolay saw the dogs struggling with the wolf in the watercourse, saw the wolf's gray coat under them, his outstretched hind leg, his head gasping in terror, and his ears turned back (Karay had him by the throat)—the moment when Nikolay saw all this was the happiest moment of his life. He had already grasped the pommel of his saddle to dismount and stab the wolf, when suddenly the beast's head was thrust up above the mass of dogs, then his forelegs were on the bank of the watercourse. The wolf clacked his teeth (Karay did not have hold of his throat now), leaped with his hind legs out of the hollow, and, with his tail between his legs,

pushed forward, getting away from the dogs again. Karay, his hair starting up, had difficulty in getting out of the watercourse; he seemed to be bruised or wounded.

"My God, why is this!" Nikolay shouted in despair. The uncle's huntsman galloped across the line of the wolf's advance from the other side, and again his hounds stopped the wolf, again he was hemmed in.

Nikolay, his groom, the uncle, and his huntsman pranced about the beast with shouts and cries of "loo," every minute on the point of dismounting when the wolf crouched back, and dashing forward again every time the wolf shook himself free and moved toward the copse where his safety lay.

At the beginning of this onset Danilo, hearing the hunters' cries, had darted out of the copse. He saw that Karay had hold of the wolf and checked his horse, supposing the deed was done. But seeing that the hunters did not dismount from their horses, and that the wolf was shaking himself free and again making his escape, Danilo galloped his own horse, not toward the wolf, but in a straight line toward the copse, to cut him off as Karay had done. Thanks to this maneuver, he bore straight down on the wolf when the uncle's dogs had a second time fallen behind him.

Danilo galloped up in silence, holding a drawn dagger in his left hand, and thrashing the heaving sides of his chestnut horse with his riding whip, as though it were a flail.

Nikolay neither saw nor heard Danilo till his panting chestnut darted close by him, and he heard the sound of a falling body and saw Danilo lying in the midst of the dogs on the wolf's back, trying to get him by the ears. It was obvious to the dogs, to the hunters, and to the wolf that all was over now. The beast, its ears drawn back in terror, tried to get up, but the dogs clung to him. Danilo, as he got up, stumbled, and, as though sinking down to rest, rolled with all his weight on the wolf, and snatched him by the ears. Nikolay would have stabbed him, but Danilo whispered: "Don't; we will string him up!" and shifting his position he put his foot on the wolf's neck. They put a stick in the wolf's jaws, fastened it, as it were bridling him with a leash, and tied his legs. Danilo swung the wolf twice from side to side.

With happy, exhausted faces they tied the great wolf alive on a horse that started and snorted in alarm at it; and with all the dogs trooping after and whining at the wolf, they brought it to the place where all were to meet. The wolfhounds had captured two cubs, and the greyhounds three. The party met together to show their booty and

tell their stories, and everyone went to look at the big wolf, which with its heavy-browed head hanging downward and the stick in its teeth, gazed with its great, glassy eyes at the crowd of dogs and men around it. When they touched him, his fastened legs quivered and he looked wildly and yet simply at all of them. Count Ilya Andreitch too went up and touched the wolf.

"Oh, what a great beast!" he said. "He's an old one, eh?" he asked Danilo, who was standing near him.

"That he is, your excellency," answered Danilo, hurriedly taking off his cap.

The count remembered the wolf he had let slip and Danilo's outburst. "You have a hot temper though, my man," said the count.

Danilo said nothing, but he shyly smiled a smile of childlike sweetness and amiability.

The old count went home. Natasha and Petya promised to follow immediately. The hunting party went on farther, as it was still early. In the middle of the day they set the hounds into a ravine covered with thickly growing young copse. Nikolay, standing on the stubble land above, could see all his party.

Facing Nikolay on the opposite side was a field of green corn, and there stood his huntsman, alone in a hollow behind a nut bush. As soon as they loosed the hounds, Nikolay heard a hound he knew—Volturn—give tongue at intervals, other hounds joined him, pausing now and then, and taking up the cry again. A moment later he heard from the ravine the cry that they were on the scent of a fox, and all the pack joining together made for the opening toward the green corn away from Nikolay.

He saw the whippers-in in their red caps galloping along the edge of the overgrown ravine, he could see the dogs even and was every instant expecting the fox to come into sight on the farther side among the green corn.

The huntsman standing in the hollow started off and let his dogs go, and Nikolay saw the red, uncouth-looking fox hurrying along close to the ground, with its bushy tail, through the green corn. The dogs bore down on it. And now they were getting close, and now the fox was beginning to wind in circles between them, making the circles more and more rapidly, and sweeping its bushy brush around it, when all of a sudden a strange white dog flew down upon it, and was followed by a black one, and everything was confusion, and the dogs formed a star-shaped figure round it, scarcely moving, with their heads together, and their tails out. Two huntsmen galloped down to

the dogs; one in a red cap, the other, a stranger, in a green coat.

What's the meaning of it? wondered Nikolay. Where did that huntsman spring from? That's not Uncle's man.

The huntsmen got the fox and remained a long while standing on foot there, without hanging the fox on the saddle.

He could see the horses with their snaffles jutting up standing close by the huntsmen, and the dogs lying down. The huntsmen were waving their arms and doing something with the fox. A horn was sounded—the signal agreed upon in case of a dispute.

"That's Ilagin's huntsman getting up a row of some sort with our Ivan," said Nikolay's groom.

Nikolay sent the groom to call his sister and Petya to come to him and rode at a walking pace toward the spot where the whippers-in were getting the hounds together. Several of the party galloped to the scene of the squabble.

Nikolay dismounted, and, with Natasha and Petya, who had ridden up, he stood by the hounds waiting to hear how the difficulty was settled. The huntsman who had been quarreling came riding out of the bushes with the fox on the crupper and rode toward his young master. He took off his cap a long way off and tried as he came up to speak respectfully. But he was pale and gasping for breath, and his face was wrathful. One of his eyes was blackened, but he was probably not aware of it.

"What was the matter over there?" asked Nikolay.

"Why, he was going to kill the fox right under our hounds' noses! And my bitch it was—the mouse-colored one—that had hold of it. You can go and have me up for it! Snatching hold of the fox! I gave him one with the fox. Here it is on my saddle. Is it a taste of this you want?" said the huntsman, pointing to his hunting knife and apparently imagining that he was still talking to his enemy.

Nikolay did not waste words on the man but, asking his sister and Petya to wait for him, rode over to where the hounds and the men of the enemy, Ilagin, were gathered together.

The victorious huntsman rode off to join his fellows, and there, the center of a sympathetic and inquisitive crowd, he recounted his exploit.

The point was that Ilagin, with whom the Rostovs had some quarrel and were engaged in a lawsuit, was hunting over places that by old custom belonged to the Rostovs, and now, as though of design, he had sent his men to the ravine where the Rostovs were and had allowed his man to snatch a fox under a stranger's dogs.

Nikolay had never seen Ilagin, but he had heard of the quarrel-

someness and obstinacy of their neighbor; and rushing, as he always did, to an extreme in his judgments and feelings, he cordially detested him and looked upon him as his bitterest foe. Excited and angry, he rode up to him now, grasping his whip in his hand, fully prepared to take the most energetic and desperate measures in dealing with the enemy.

He had scarcely ridden beyond the ridge of the copse when he saw a stout gentleman in a beaver cap riding toward him on a handsome raven horse, accompanied by two grooms.

Instead of an enemy Iliagin found in Iliagin a courteous gentleman of imposing appearance, who was particularly anxious to make the young count's acquaintance. Iliagin took off his beaver cap as he approached Rostov and said that he greatly regretted what had occurred, that he would have the man punished, that he begged the count to let them be better acquainted, and offered him the use of his preserves for hunting.

Natasha had ridden up not far behind her brother, in some excitement, fearing he might do something awful. Seeing that the opponents were exchanging affable greetings, she rode up to them. Iliagin lifted his beaver cap higher than ever to Natasha and, smiling agreeably, said that the countess was indeed a Diana in both her passion for the chase and her beauty, of which he had heard so much.

Iliagin, to efface the impression of his huntsman's crime, insisted on Rostov's coming to his upland a verst away, which he preserved for his own shooting, and which he described as teeming with hares. Nikolay agreed, and the whole party, its numbers now doubled, moved on. They had to ride through the fields to get there. The huntsmen moved in a line, and the gentry rode together. The uncle, Rostov, and Iliagin glanced stealthily at each other's dogs, trying not to be observed by the others, and looking uneasily for rivals likely to excel their own dogs.

Rostov was particularly struck by the beauty of a small thoroughbred, slender black and tan bitch of Iliagin's, with muscles like steel, a delicate nose, and prominent black eyes. He had heard of the sporting qualities of Iliagin's dogs, and in that handsome bitch he saw a rival of his Milka.

In the middle of a sedate conversation about the crops of the year, started by Iliagin, Nikolay pointed out the black and tan bitch.

"You have a fine bitch there!" he said, in a careless tone "Is she clever?"

"That one? Yes, she's a good beast—she can catch a hare," Iliagin said indifferently of his black and tan Yerza, a bitch for whom he

had a year before given a neighbor three families of house serfs. "So they don't brag of their threshing, count," he went on, taking up their previous conversation. And feeling it only polite to repay the young count's compliment, Ilagin scanned his dogs and pitched on Milka, whose broad back caught his eye.

"That's a good black and tan you have there—a fine one!" he said.

"Yes, she's all right, she can run," answered Nikolay. Oh, if only a good big hare would run into the field, I would show you what she's like! he thought, and, turning to his groom, he said he would give a ruble to anyone who would unearth a hare.

"I can't understand," Ilagin went on, "how it is other sportsmen are so envious over game and dogs. I will tell you for myself, count. I enjoy hunting, as you know; the chase in such company . . . what could be more delightful" (he doffed his beaver cap again to Natasha); "but this reckoning up of the skins one has carried off—I don't care about that."

"Oh, no!"

"Nor could I be chagrined at my dog's being outdone by another man's—all I care about is the chase itself, eh; count? And so I consider—"

"Oh, . . . ho . . . ho," sounded at that moment in a prolonged call from one of the grooms. He was standing on a knoll in the stubble with his whip held up, and he called once more, "O . . . ho . . . aho!" (This call, and the lifted whip, meant that he saw a hare squatting before him.)

"Ah, he has started a hare, I fancy," said Ilagin carelessly. "Well, let us course it, count!"

"Yes, we must . . . but what do you say, together?" answered Nikolay, looking intently at Yerza and the uncle's red Rugay, the two rivals against whom he had never before had a chance of putting his dogs. What if they outdo my Milka from the first? he thought, riding by the uncle and Ilagin toward the hare.

"Is it full-grown?" asked Ilagin, going up to the groom who had started it, and looking about him with some excitement, as he whistled to his Yerza. . . . "And you, Mihail Nikanoritch?" he said to the uncle.

The uncle rode on, looking sullen.

"What's the use of my competing with you? Why, your dogs—you have paid a village for each of them; they're worth thousands. You try yours against each other, and I'll look on!"

"Rugay! Hey, hey," he shouted. "Rugayushka!" he added, involuntarily expressing his tenderness and the hope he put in the red



dog by this affectionate diminutive. Natasha saw and felt the emotion concealed by the two elderly men and by her brother and was herself excited by it. The groom on the knoll was standing with his whip lifted; the gentlemen rode up to him at a walking pace; the pack were on the rim of the horizon, moving away from the hare; the rest of the hunting party too were riding away. Everything was done slowly and deliberately.

"Which way is its head?" asked Nikolay, after riding a hundred paces toward the groom. But before the groom had time to answer, the hare, who had been sniffing in the ground the frost coming next morning, leaped up from its squatting posture. The pack of hounds on leashes flew baying downhill after the hare; the harriers, who were not on leash, rushed from all sides toward the hounds or after the hare. The whippers-in, who had been moving so deliberately, galloped over the country getting the dogs together, with shouts of "Stop!" while the huntsmen directed their course with shouts of "Oh . . . Oh . . . ahoy!" Nikolay, Natasha, and the uncle and Ilagin, who had been hitherto so composed, flew ahead, reckless of how or where they went, seeing nothing but the dogs and the hare, and afraid of nothing but losing sight for an instant of the course. The hare turned out to be a fleet and strong one. When he jumped up he did not at once race off but cocked up his ears, listening to the shouts and tramp of hoofs that came from all sides at once. He took a dozen bounds not very swiftly, letting the dogs gain on him, but at last, choosing his direction and grasping his danger, he put his ears back and dashed off at full speed. He had been crouching in the stubble, but the green field was in front of him, and there it was marshy ground. The two dogs of the groom who had started him were the nearest and the first to be on the scent after him. But they had not got near him when Ilagin's black and tan Yerza flew ahead of them, got within a yard, pounced on him with fearful swiftness, aiming at the hare's tail, and rolled over, thinking she had hold of him. The hare arched his back and bounded off more nimbly than ever. The broad-backed black and tan Milka flew ahead of Yerza and began rapidly gaining on the hare.

"Milashka! Little mother!" Nikolay shouted triumphantly. Milka seemed on the point of pouncing on the hare, but she overtook him and flew beyond. The hare doubled back. Again the graceful Yerza dashed at him and kept close to the hare's tail, as though measuring the distance, so as not to miss getting hold of the hare, by the haunch this time.

"Yerzinka, little sister!" wailed Ilagin, in a voice unlike his own.

Yerza did not heed his appeals. At the very moment when she seemed about to seize the hare, he doubled and darted away to the ditch between the stubble and the green field. Again Yerza and Milka, running side by side, like a pair of horses, flew after the hare; the hare was better off in the ditch, the dogs could not gain on him so quickly.

"Rugay! Rugayushka! Forward—quick march," another voice shouted this time. And Rugay, the uncle's red, broad-shouldered dog, stretching out and curving his back, caught up the two foremost dogs, pushed ahead of them, flung himself with complete self-abandonment right on the hare, turned him out of the ditch into the green field, flung himself still more viciously on him once more, sinking up to his knees in the swampy ground, and all that could be seen was the dog rolling over with the hare, covering his back with mud. The dogs formed a star-shaped figure round him.

A moment later all the party pulled their horses up round the crowding dogs. The uncle alone dismounted in a rapture of delight, and, cutting off the feet, shaking the hare for the blood to drip off, he looked about him, his eyes restless with excitement, and his hands and legs moving nervously. He went on talking, regardless of what or to whom he spoke.

"That's something like, quick march . . . there's a dog for you . . . he outstripped them all . . . if they cost a thousand or they cost a ruble . . . forward, quick march, and no mistake!" he kept saying, panting and looking wrathfully about him, as though he were abusing someone, as though they had all been his enemies, had insulted him, and he had only now at last succeeded in paving them out. "So much for your thousand-ruble dogs—forward, quick march! Rugay, here's the foot," he said, dropping the dog the hare's muddy foot, which he had just cut off; "you've deserved it—forward, quick march!"

"She wore herself out—ran it down three times all alone," Nikolay was saying, listening to no one, and heedless whether he were heard or not

"To be sure, cutting in sideways like that!" Ilagin's groom was saying.

"Why, when it had been missed like that, and once down, any yard dog could catch it of course," said Ilagin, at the same moment, red and breathless from the gallop and the excitement. At the same time Natasha, without taking breath, gave vent to her delight and excitement in a shriek so shrill that it set everyone's ears tingling. In that shriek she expressed just what the others were expressing by

talking all at once. And her shriek was so strange that she must have been ashamed of that wild scream, and the others must have been surprised at it at any other time.

The uncle himself twisted up the hare, flung him neatly and smartly across his horse's back, seeming to reproach them all by this gesture, and with an air of not caring to speak to anyone, he mounted his bay and rode away. All but he rode on dispirited and disappointed, and it was some time before they could recover their previous affectation of indifference. For a long time they stared at the red dog, Rugay, who, with his round back spattered with mud, and clinking the rings of his leash, walked with the serene air of a conqueror behind the uncle's horse.

I'm like all the rest till it's a question of coursing a hare; but then you had better look out! was what Nikolay fancied the dog's air expressed.

When the uncle rode up to Nikolay a good deal later and addressed a remark to him, he felt flattered at the uncle's deigning to speak to him after what had happened.

# ALIBI IKE

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by RING LARDNER

(1915)

*There are two types of enthusiasts for the works of Ring Lardner: those who rate him as a masterly satirist who wrote with one of the most savage pens since Jonathan Swift; those who read him to laugh. Lardner's first fiction was his baseball series about "the busher," Jack Keefe, which was eventually collected in book form under the title You Know Me, Al. That was out-and-out humor. Alibi Ike, written a few years later, continues in that strain and has comparatively little of the bitterness of other Lardner stories of a later period, such as Champion and Haircut. Lardner, it seems, always reserved large measures of compassion and affection for his erratic baseball heroes even when he was writing pessimistically about the rest of the human race. For all of its lack of social sting and import, serious critics rate Alibi Ike one of his great stories. Humor lovers and baseball fans call it his greatest.*

HIS RIGHT NAME was Frank X. Farrell, and I guess the X stood for "Excuse me." Because he never pulled a play, good or bad, on or off the field, without apologizin' for it.

"Alibi Ike" was the name Carey wished on him the first day he reported down South. O' course we all cut out the "Alibi" part of it right away for the fear he would overhear it and bust somebody. But we called him "Ike" right to his face and the rest of it was understood by everybody on the club except Ike himself.

He ast me one time, he says:

"What do you all call me Ike for? I ain't no Yid."

"Carey give you the name," I says. "It's his nickname for everybody he takes a likin' to."

"He mustn't have only a few friends then," says Ike. "I never heard him say 'Ike' to nobody else."

But I was goin' to tell you about Carey pamin' him. We'd been workin' out two weeks and the pitchers was showin' somethin' when this bird joined us. His first day out he stood up there so good and took such a reef at the old pill that he had everyone lookin'. Then him and Carey was together in left field, catchin' fungoes, and it was after we was through for the day that Carey told me about him.

"What do you think of Alibi Ike?" ast Carey.

"Who's that?" I says.

"This here Farrell in the outfield," says Carey.

"He looks like he could hit," I says

"Yes," says Carey, "but he can't hit near as good as he can apologize"

Then Carey went on to tell me what Ike had been pullin' out there. He'd dropped the first fly ball that was hit to him and told Carey his glove wasn't broke in good yet, and Carey says the glove could easy of been Kid Gleason's gran'father. He made a whale of a catch out o' the next one and Carey says "Nice work!" or somethin' like that, but Ike says he could of caught the ball with his back turned only he slipped when he started after it and, besides that, the air currents fooled him

"I thought you done well to get to the ball," says Carey.

"I ought to been settin' under it," says Ike

"What did you hit last year?" Carey ast him.

"I had malaria most o' the season," says Ike. "I wound up with 356."

"Where would I have to go to get malaria?" says Carey, but Ike didn't wise up

I and Carey and him set at the same table together for supper. It took him half an hour longer'n us to eat because he had to excuse himself every time he lifted his fork

"Doctor told me I needed starch," he'd say, and then toss a shovelful o' potatoes into him. Or, "They ain't much meat on one o' these chops," he'd tell us, and grab another one. Or he'd say: "Nothin' like onions for a cold," and then he'd dip into the perfumery.

"Better try that apple sauce," says Carey. "It'll help your malaria."

"Whose malaria?" says Ike. He'd forgot already why he didn't only hit .356 last year.

I and Carey begin to lead him on.

"Whereabouts did you say your home was?" I ast him.

"I live with my folks," he says. "We live in Kansas City—not right down in the business part—outside a ways."

"How's that come?" says Carey. "I should think you'd get rooms in the post office."

But Ike was too busy curin' his cold to get that one.

"Are you married?" I ast him.

"No," he says. "I never run round much with girls, except to shows onct in a wile and parties and dances and roller skatin'."

"Never take 'em to the prize fights, eh?" says Carey.

"We don't have no real good bouts," says Ike. "Just loush stuff. And I never figured a boxin' match was a place for the ladies."

Well, after supper he pulled a cigar out and lit it, I was just goin' to ask him what he done it for, but he beat me to it.

"Kind o' rests a man to smoke after a good workout," he says.

"Kind o' settles a man's supper, too."

"Looks like a pretty good cigar," says Carey.

"Yes," says Ike. "A friend o' mine give it to me—a fella in Kansas City that runs a billiard room."

"Do you play billiards?" I ast him.

"I used to play a fair game," he says. "I'm all out o' practice now—can't hardly make a shot."

We coaxed him into a four-handed battle, him and Carey against Jack Mack and I. Say, he couldn't play billiards as good as Willie Hoppe; not quite. But to hear him tell it, he didn't make a good shot all evenin'. I'd leave him an awful-lookin' layout and he'd gather 'em up in one try and then run a couple o' hundred, and between every carom he'd say he put too much stuff on the ball, or the English didn't take, or the table wasn't true, or his stick was crooked, or somethin'. And all the time he had the balls actin' like they was Dutch soldiers and him Kaiser William. We started out to play fifty points, but we had to make it a thousand so as I and Jack and Carey could try the table.

The four of us set round the lobby a wile after we was through

playin', and when it got along toward bedtime Carey whispered to me and says

"Ike'd like to go to bed, but he can't think up no excus' "

Carey hadn't hardly finished whisperin' when Ike got up and pulled it.

"Well, good night, boys," he says "I ain't sleepy, but I got some gravel in my shoes and it's killin' my feet "

We knowed he hadn't never left the hotel since we'd came in from the grounds and changed our clo'es So Carey says

"I should think they'd take them gravel pits out o' the billiard room "

But Ike was already on his way to the elevator, limp'in'

"He's got the world beat," says Carey to Jack and I "I've knew lots o' guys that had an alibi for every mistake they made, I've heard pitchers say that the ball slipped when somebody cracked one off'n 'em, I've heard infielders complain of a sore arm after heavin' one into the stand, and I've saw outfielders taken sick with a dizzy spell when they've misjudged a fly ball But this baby can't even go to bed without apologizin', and I bet he excuses himself to the razor when he gets ready to shave "

"And at that " says Jack, ' he's goin' to make us a good man "

' Yes," says Carey Unless rheumatism keeps his battin' average down to .400 '

Well, sir, Ike kept whalin' away at the ball all through the trip till everybody knowed he'd won a job Cap had him in there regular the last few exhibition games and told the newspaper boys a week before the season opened that he was goin' to start him in Kane's place

"You're there, kid " says Carey to Ike, the night Cap made the 'nnouncement ' They ain't many boys that wins a big league berth their third year out

"I'd of been up here a year ago," says Ike. "only I was bent over all season with lumbigo "

## II

It rained down in Cincinnati one day and somebody organized a little game o' cards They was shy two men to make six and ast I and Carey to play

"I'm with you if you get Ike and make it seven-handed," says Carey.

So they got a hold of Ike and we went up to Smitty's room.

"I pretty near forgot how many you deal," says Ike. "It's been a long wile since I played."

I and Carey give each other the wink, and sure enough, he was just as ignorant about poker as billiards. About the second hand, the pot was opened two or three ahead of him, and they was three in when it come his turn. It cost a buck, and he throwed in two.

"It's raised, boys," somebody says.

"Gosh, that's right, I did raise it," says Ike.

"Take out a buck if you didn't mean to tilt her," says Carey.

"No," says Ike, "I'll leave it go."

Well, it was raised back at him, and then he made another mistake and raised again. They was only three left in when the draw come. Smitty'd opened with a pair o' kings and he didn't help 'em. Ike stood pat. The guy that'd raised him back was flushin' and he didn't fill. So Smitty checked and Ike bet and didn't get no call. He tossed his hand away, but I grabbed it and give it a look. He had king, queen, jack and two tens. Alibi Ike he must have seen me peekin', for he leaned over and whispered to me.

"I overlooked my hand," he says. "I thought all the wile it was a straight."

"Yes," I says, "that's why you raised twice by mistake."

They was another pot that he come into with tens and fours. It was tilted a couple o' times and two o' the strong fellas drawed ahead of Ike. They each drawed one. So Ike throwed away his little pair and come out with four tens. And they was four treys against him. Carey'd looked at Ike's discards and then he says:

"This lucky bum busted two pair."

"No, no, I didn't," says Ike.

"Yes, yes, you did," says Carey, and showed us the two fours.

"What do you know about that?" says Ike. "I'd of swore one was a five spot."

Well, we hadn't had no pay day yet, and after a wile everybody except Ike was goin' shy. I could see him gettin' restless and I was wonderin' how he'd make the getaway. He tried two or three times. "I got to buy some collars before supper," he says.

"No hurry," says Smitty. "The stores here keeps open all night in April."

After a minute he opened up again.

"My uncle out in Nebraska ain't expected to live," he says. "I ought to send a telegram."



"Would that save him?" says Carey.

"No, it sure wouldn't," says Ike, "but I ought to leave my old man know where I'm at."

"When did you hear about your uncle?" says Carey.

"Just this mornin'," says Ike.

"Who told you?" ast Carey.

"I got a wire from my old man," says Ike.

"Well," says Carey, "your old man knows you're still here yet this afternoon if you was here this mornin'. Trains leavin' Cincinnati in the middle o' the day don't carry no ball clubs."

"Yes," says Ike, "that's true. But he don't know where I'm goin' to be next week."

"Ain't he got no schedule?" ast Carey.

"I sent him one openin' day," says Ike, "but it takes mail a long time to get to Idaho."

"I thought your old man lived in Kansas City," says Carey.

"He does when he's home," says Ike.

"But now," says Carey, "I s'pose he's went to Idaho so as he can be near your sick uncle in Nebraska."

"He s visitin' my other uncle in Idaho "

"Then how does he keep posted about your sick uncle?" ast Carey.

"He don't," says Ike. "He don't even know my other uncle's sick. That's why I ought to wire and tell him "

"Good night!" says Carey.

"What town in Idaho is your old man at?" I says.

Ike thought it over

"No town at all," he says "But he's near a town."

"Near what town?" I says.

"Yuma," says Ike.

Well, by this time he'd lost two or three pots and he was desperate. We was playin' just as fast as we could, because we seen we couldn't hold him much longer. But he was trvin' so hard to frame an escape that he couldn't pay no attention to the cards, and it looked like we'd get his whole pile away from him if we could make him stick.

The telephone saved him. The minute it begun to ring, five of us jumped for it. But Ike was there first.

"Yes," he says, answerin' it. "This is him. I'll come right down."

And he slammed up the receiver and beat it out o' the door without even sayin' good-by

"Smitty'd ought to locked the door," says Carey.

"What did he win?" ast Carey.

We figured it up—sixty-odd bucks.

"And the next time we ask him to play," says Carey, "his fingers will be so stiff he can't hold the cards."

Well, we set round a wile talkin' it over, and pretty soon the telephone rung again. Smitty answered it. It was a friend of his'n from Hamilton and he wanted to know why Smitty didn't hurry down. He was the one that had called before and Ike had told him he was Smitty.

"Ike'd ought to split with Smitty's friend," says Carey.

"No," I says, "he'll need all he won. It costs money to buy collars and to send telegrams from Cincinnati to your old man in Texas and keep him posted on the health o' your uncle in Cedar Rapids, D.C."

### III

And you ought to heard him out there on that field! They wasn't a day when he didn't pult six or seven, and it didn't make no difference whether he was goin' good or bad. If he popped up in the pinch he should of made a base hit and the reason he didn't was so-and-so. And if he cracked one for three bases he ought to had a home run, only the ball wasn't lively, or the wind brought it back, or he tripped on a lump o' dirt, roundin' first base.

They was one afternoon in New York when he beat all records. Big Marquard was workin' against us and he was good.

In the first innin' Ike hit one clear over that right field stand, but it was a few feet foul. Then he got another foul and then the count come to two and two. Then Rube slipped one acrost on him and he was called out.

"What do you know about that!" he says afterward on the bench. "I lost count. I thought it was three and one, and I took a strike."

"You took a strike all right," says Carey. "Even the umps knowed it was a strike."

"Yes," says Ike, "but you can bet I wouldn't of took it if I'd knew it was the third one. The scoreboard had it wrong."

"That scoreboard ain't for you to look at," says Cap. "It's for you to hit that old pill against."

"Well," says Ike, "I could of hit that one over the scoreboard if I'd knew it was the third."

"Was it a good ball?" I says.

"Well, no, it wasn't," says Ike. "It was inside."

"How far inside?" says Carey.

"Oh, two or three inches or half a foot," says Ike.

"I guess you wouldn't of threatened the scoreboard with it then," says Cap.

"I'd of pulled it down the right foul line if I hadn't thought he'd call it a ball," says Ike.

Well, in New York's part o' the innin' Doyle cracked one and Ike run back a mile and a half and caught it with one hand. We was all sayin' what a whale of a play it was, but he had to apologize just the same as for gettin' struck out.

"That stand's so high," he says, "that a man don't never see a ball till it's right on top o' you."

"Didn't you see that one?" ast Cap.

"Not at first," says Ike; "not till it raised up above the roof o' the stand."

"Then why did you start back as soon as the ball was hit?" says Cap.

"I knowed by the sound that he'd got a good hold of it," says Ike.

"Yes," says Cap, "but how'd you know what direction to run in?"

"Doyle usually hits 'em that way, the way I run," says Ike.

"Why don't you play blindfolded?" says Carey.

"Might as well, with that big high stand to bother a man," says Ike. "If I could of saw the ball all the time I'd of got it in my hip pocket."

Along in the fifth we was one run to the bad and Ike got on with one out. On the first ball throwed to Smitty, Ike went down. The ball was outside and Meyers throwed Ike out by ten feet.

You could see Ike's lips movin' all the way to the bench and when he got there he had his piece learned.

"Why didn't he swing?" he says.

"Why didn't you wait for his sign?" says Cap.

"He give me his sign," says Ike.

"What's his sign with you?" says Cap.

"Pickin' up some dirt with his right hand," says Ike.

"Well, I didn't see him do it," Cap says.

"He done it all right," says Ike.

Well, Smitty went out and they wasn't no more argument till they come in for the next innin'. Then Cap opened it up.

"You fellas better get your signs straight," he says.

"Do you mean me?" says Smitty.

"Yes," Cap says. "What's your sign with Ike?"

"Slidin' my left hand up to the end o' the bat and back," says Smitty.

"Do you hear that, Ike?" ast Cap.

"What of it?" says Ike.

"You says his sign was pickin' up dirt and he says it's slidin' his hand. Which is right?"

"I'm right," says Smitty. "But if you're arguin' about him goin' last innin', I didn't give him no sign."

"You pulled your cap down with your right hand, didn't you?" ast Ike.

"Well, s'pose I did," says Smitty. "That don't mean nothin'. I never told you to take that for a sign, did I?"

"I thought maybe you meant to tell me and forgot," says Ike.

They couldn't none of us answer that and they wouldn't of been no more said if Ike had of shut up. But wile we was settin' there Carey got on with two out and stole second clean.

"There!" says Ike. "That's what I was tryin' to do and I'd of got away with it if Smitty'd swang and bothered the Indian."

"Oh!" says Smitty. "You was tryin' to steal then, was you? I thought you claimed I give you the hit and run."

"I didn't claim no such a thing," says Ike. "I thought maybe you might of gave me a sign, but I was goin' anyway because I thought I had a good start."

Cap prob'ly would of hit him with a bat, only just about that time Doyle booted one on Hayes and Carey come acrost with the run that tied.

Well, we go into the ninth finally, one and one, and Marquard walks McDonald with nobody out.

"Lay it down," says Cap to Ike.

And Ike goes up there with orders to hunt and cracks the first ball into that right-field stand! It was fair this time, and we're two ahead, but I didn't think about that at the time. I was too busy watchin' Cap's face. First he turned pale and then he got red as fire and then he got blue and purple, and finally he just laid back and busted out laughin'. So we wasn't afraid to laugh ourselves when we seen him doin' it, and when Ike come in everybody on the bench was in hysterics.

But instead o' takin' advantage, Ike had to try and excuse himself. His play was to shut up and he didn't know how to make it.

"Well," he says, "if I hadn't hit quite so quick at that one I bet it'd of cleared the center-field fence."

Cap stopped laughin'.

"It'll cost you plain fifty," he says.

"What for?" says Ike

"When I say 'bunt' I mean 'bunt,'" says Cap.

"You didn't say 'bunt,'" says Ike.

"I says 'Lay it down,'" says Cap. "If that don't mean 'bunt,' what does it mean?"

"I ay it down' means 'bunt' all right," says Ike, "but I understood you to say 'Lay on it' "

"All right," says Cap, "and the little misunderstandin' will cost you fifty."

Ike didn't say nothin' for a few minutes. Then he had another bright idcar.

"I was just kiddin' about misunderstandin' you," he says. "I knowed you wanted me to bunt "

"Well, then, why didn't you bunt?" ast Cap

"I was goin' to on the next ball," says Ike. "But I thought if I took a good wallop I'd have 'em all fooled. So I walloped at the first one to fool 'em, and I didn't have no intention o' hittin' it."

"You tried to miss it, did you?" says Cap.

"Yes." says Ike

"How'd you happen to hit it?" ast Cap.

"Well," Ike says, "I was lookin' for him to throw me a fast one and I was goin' to swing under it. But he come with a hook and I met it right square where I was swingin' to go under the fast one "

"Great!" says Cap. "Boys," he says, "Ike's learned how to hit Marquard's curve. Pretend a fast one's comin' and then try to miss it. It's a good thing to know and Ike'd ought to be willin' to pay for the lesson. So I'm goin' to make it a hundred instead o' fifty "

The game wound up 3 to 1. The fine didn't go, because Ike hit like a wild man all through that trip and we made pretty near a clean-up. The night we went to Philly I got him cornered in the car and I says to him:

"Forget them alibis for a wile and tell me somethin'. What'd you do that for, swing that time against Marquard when you was told to bunt?"

"I'll tell you," he says. "That ball he throwed me looked just like the one I struck out on in the first innin' and I wanted to show Cap

what I could of done to that other one if I'd knew it was the third strike."

"But," I says, "the one you struck out on in the first innin' was a fast ball."

"So was the one I cracked in the ninth," says Ike.

#### IV

You've saw Cap's wife, o' course. Well, her sister's about twict as good-lookin' as her, and that's goin' some.

Cap took his missus down to St. Louis the second trip and the other one come down from St. Joe to visit her. Her name is Dolly, and some doll is right.

Well, Cap was goin' to take the two sisters to a show and he wanted a beau for Dolly. He left it to her and she picked Ike. He'd hit three on the nose that afternoon—of'n Sallee, too.

They fell for each other that first evenin'. Cap told us how it come off. She begin flatterin' Ike for the star game he'd played and o' course he begin excusin' himself for not doin' better. So she thought he was modest and it went strong with her. And she believed everything he said and that made her solid with him—that and her make-up. They was together every mornin' and evenin' for the five days we was there. In the afternoons Ike played the grandest ball you ever see, hittin' and runnin' the bases like a fool and catchin' everything that stayed in the park.

I told Cap, I says: "You'd ought to keep the doll with us and he'd make Cobb's figures look sick."

But Dolly had to go back to St. Joe and we come home for a long serious.

Well, for the next three weeks Ike had a letter to read every day and he'd set in the clubhouse readin' it till mornin' practice was half over. Cap didn't say nothin' to him, because he was goin' so good. But I and Carey wasted a lot of our time tryin' to get him to own up who the letters was from. Fine chanct!

"What are you readin'?" Carey'd say. "A bill?"

"No," Ike'd say, "not exactly a bill. It's a letter from a fella I used to go to school with."

"High school or college?" I'd ask him.

"College," he'd say.

"What college?" I'd say.

Then he'd stall a wile and then he'd say:

"I didn't go to the college myself, but my friend went there."

"How did it happen you didn't go?" Carey'd ask him.

"Well," he'd say, "they wasn't no colleges near where I lived."

"Didn't you live in Kansas City?" I'd say to him.

One time he'd say he did and another time he didn't. One time he says he lived in Michigan.

"Where at?" says Carey.

"Near Detroit," he says.

"Well," I says, "Detroit's near Ann Arbor and that's where they got the university."

"Yes," says Ike, "they got it there now, but they didn't have it there then."

"I come pretty near goin' to Syracuse," I says, "only they wasn't no railroads runnin' through there in them days."

"Where'd this friend o' yours go to college?" says Carey.

"I forget now," says Ike.

"Was it Carlisle?" ast Carey.

"No," says Ike, "his folks wasn't very well off."

"That's what barred me from Smith," I says.

"I was goin' to tackle Cornell's," says Carey, "but the doctor told me I'd have hav fever if I didn't stay up North."

"Your friend writes long letters," I says.

"Yes," says Ike; "he's tellin' me about a ballplayer."

"Where does he play?" ast Carey.

"Down in the Texas League—Fort Wayne," says Ike.

"It looks like a girl's writin'," Carey says.

"A girl wrote it," says Ike. "That's my friend's sister, writin' for him."

"Didn't they teach writin' at this here college where he went?" says Carey.

"Sure," Ike says, "they taught writin', but he got his hand cut off in a railroad wreck."

"How long ago?" I says.

"Right after he got out o' college," says Ike.

"Well," I says, "I should think he'd of learned to write with his left hand by this time."

"It's his left hand that was cut off," says Ike; "and he was left-handed."

"You get a letter every day," says Carey. "They're all the same

writin'. Is he tellin' you about a different ballplayer every time he writes?"

"No," Ike says. "It's the same ballplayer. He just tells me what he does every day."

"From the size o' the letters, they don't play nothin' but double-headers down there," says Carey

We figured that Ike spent most of his evenins answerin' the letters from his "friend's sister," so we kept tryin' to date him up for shows and parties to see how he'd duck out of 'em. He was bugs over spaghetti, so we told him one day that they was goin' to be a big feed of it over to Joe's that night and he was invited.

"How long'll it last?" he says.

"Well," we says, "we're goin' right over there after the game and stay till they close up."

"I can't go," he says, "unless they leave me come home at eight bells."

"Nothin' doin'," says Carey. "Joc'd get sore."

"I can't go then," says Ike.

"Why not?" I ast him.

"Well," he says, "my landlady locks up the house at eight and I left my key home."

"You can come and stay with me," says Carey.

"No," he says, "I can't sleep in a strange bed"

"How do you get along when we're on the road?" says I.

"I don't never sleep the first night anywheres," he says. "After that I'm all right."

"You'll have time to chase home and get your key right after the game," I told him.

"The key ain't home," says Ike. "I lent it to one o' the other fellas and he's went out o' town and took 't with him."

"Couldn't you borry another key off'n the landlady?" Carey ast him.

"No," he says, "that's the only one they is."

Well, the day before we started East again, Ike come into the clubhouse all smiles.

"Your birthday?" I ast him.

"No," he says.

"What do you feel so good about?" I says.

"Got a letter from my old man," he says. "My uncle's goin' to get well."



"Is that the one in Nebraska?" says I.

"Not right in Nebraska," says Ike. "Near there."

But afterwards we got the right dope from Cap. Dolly'd blew in from Missouri and was going to make the trip with her sister.

## V

Well, I want to alibi Carey and I for whát come off in Boston. If we'd of had any idear what we was doin', we'd never did it. They wasn't nobody outside o' maybe Ike and 'he dame that felt worse over it than I and Carey.

The first two days we didn't see nothin' of Ike and her except out to the park. The rest o' the time they was sight-seein' over to Cambridge and down to Revere and out to Brook-a-line and all the other places where the rubes go.

But when we come into the beanery after the third game Cap's wife called us over.

"If you want to see somethin' pretty," she says, "look at the third finger on Sis's left hand."

Well, o' course we knowed before we looked that it wasn't goin' to be no hangnail. Nobody was su'prised when Dolly blew into the dinin' room with it—a rock that Ike'd bought off'n Diamond Joe the first trip to New York. Only o' course it'd been set into a lady's-size ring instead o' the automobile tire he'd been wearin'.

Cap and his missus and Ike and Dolly ett supper together, only Ike didn't eat nothin', but just set there blushin' and spillin' things on the tablcloth. I heard him excusin' himself for not havin' no appetite. He says he couldn't never eat when he was clost to the ocean. He'd forgot about them sixty-five oysters he destroyed the first night o' the trip before.

He was goin' to take her to a show, so after supper he went upstairs to change his collar. She had to doll up, too, and o' course Ike was through long before her.

If you remember the hotel in Boston, they's a little parlor where the piano's at and then they's another little parlor openin' off o' that. Well, when Ike come down Smitty was playin' a few chords and I and Carey was harmonizin'. We seen Ike go up to the desk to leave his key and we called him in. He tried to duck away, but we wouldn't stand for it.

We ast him what he was all duded up for and he says he was goin' to the theayter.

"Goin' alone?" says Carey.

"No," he says, "a friend o' mine's goin' with me."

"What do you say if we go along?" says Carey.

"I ain't only got two tickets," he says.

"Well," says Carey, "we can go down there with you and buy our own seats; maybe we can all get together."

"No," says Ike. "They ain't no more seats. They're all sold out."

"We can buy some off'n the scalpers," says Carey.

"I wouldn't if I was you," says Ike. "They say the show's rotten."

"What are you goin' for, then?" I ask.

"I didn't hear about it bein' rotten till I got the tickets," he says.

"Well," I say, "if you don't want to go I'll buy the tickets from you."

"No," says Ike, "I wouldn't want to cheat you. I'm stung and I'll just have to stand for it."

"What are you goin' to do with the girl, leave her here at the hotel?" I say.

"What girl?" says Ike.

"The girl you ett supper with," I say.

"Oh," he says, "we just happened to go into the dinin' room together, that's all. Cap wanted I should set down with 'em."

"I noticed," says Carey, "that she happened to be wearin' that rock you bought off'n Diamond Joe."

"Yes," says Ike. "I lent it to her for a wile."

"Did you lend her the new ring that goes with it?" I say.

"She had that already," says Ike. "She lost the set out of it."

"I wouldn't trust no strange girl with a rock o' mine," says Carey.

"Oh, I guess she's all right," Ike says. "Besides, I was tired o' the stone. When a girl asks you for somethin', what are you goin' to do?"

He started out toward the desk, but we flagged him.

"Wait a minute!" Carey says. "I got a bet with Sam here, and it's up to you to settle it."

"Well," says Ike, "make it snappy. My friend'll be here any minute."

"I bet," says Carey, "that you and that girl was engaged to be married."

"Nothin' to it," says Ike.

"Now look here," says Carey, "this is goin' to cost me real money if I lose. Cut out the alibi stuff and give it to us straight. Cap's wife just as good as told us you was roped."

Ike blushed like a kid

"Well, boys," he says, "I may as well own up. You win, Carey "

"Yatta boy!" says Carey "Congratulations!"

"You got a swell girl, Ike," I says.

"She's a peach," says Smitty

"Well, I guess she's O K," says Ike "I don't know much about girls "

"Didn't you never run round with 'em?" I says

"Oh yes, plenty of 'em," says Ike "But I never seen none I'd fall for "

"That is, till you seen this one," says Carey

"Well " says Ike "this one's O K , but I wasn't thinkin' about gettin' married yet a while "

Who done the askin', her? " says Carey

"Oh no " say Ike, "but sometimes a man don't know what he's gettin' into. Take a good lookin' girl and a man gen'ally almost always do 'bout what she wants him to "

They couldn't no girl lasso me unless I wanted to be lassoed," says Smitty

"Oh I don't know " says Ike "When ' fella gets to feelin' sorry for one of 'em it's all off

Well we left him go after shakin' hands all round But he didn't take Dolly to no show that night Sometime while we was talkin' she'd come into that other parlor and she'd stood there and heard us I don't know how much she heard But it was enough Dolly and Cap's missus took the midnight train for New York And from there Cap's wife sent her on her way back to Missouri

She'd left the ring and note for Ike with the clerk But we didn't ask Ike if the note was from his friend in Fort Wayne, Texas

## VI

When we'd came to Boston Ike was hittin' plain 397 When we got back home he'd fell off to pretty near nothin' He hadn't drove one out o' the infield in any o' them other Eastern parks, and he didn't even give no excuse for it

To show you how bad he was, he struck out three times in Brooklyn one day and never opened his trap when Cap ast him what was the matter Before, if he'd whiffed onct in a game he'd of wrote a book tellin' why

Well, we dropped from first place to fifth in four weeks and we was

still goin' down. I and Carey was about the only ones in the club that spoke to each other, and all as we did was to remind ourself o' what a boner we'd pulled.

"It's goin' to beat us out o' the big money," says Carey.

"Yes," I says, "I don't want to knock my own ball club, but it looks like a one-man team, and when that one man's dauber's down we couldn't trim our whiskers."

"We ought to knew better," says Carey.

"Yes," I says, "but why should a man pull an alibi for bein' engaged to such a bearcat as she was?"

"He shouldn't," says Carey. "But I and you knowed he would or we'd never started talkin' to him about it. He wasn't no more ashamed o' the girl than I am of a regular base hit. But he just can't come clean on no subject."

Cap had the whole story, and I and Carey was as pop'lar with him as an umpire.

"What do you want me to do, Cap?" Carey'd say to him before goin' up to hit.

"Use your own judgment," Cap'd tell him. "We want to lose another game."

But finally, one night in Pittsburgh. Cap had a letter from his missus and he come to us with it.

"You fellas," he says, "is the ones that put us on the bum, and if you're sorry I think they's a chancet for you to make good. The old lady's out to St. Joe and she's been tryin' her hardest to fix things up. She's explained that Ike don't mean nothin' with his talk; I've wrote and explained that to Dolly too. But the old lady says that Dolly says that she can't believe it. But Dolly's still stuck on this baby, and she's pinin' away just the same as Ike. And the old lady says she thinks if you two fellas would write to the girl and explain how you was always kiddin' with Ike and leadin' him on, and how the ball club was all shot to pieces since Ike quit hittin', and how he acted like he was goin' to kill himself, and this and that, she'd fall for it and maybe soften down. Dolly, the old lady says, would believe you before she'd believe I and the old lady, because she thinks it's her we're sorry for, and not him."

Well, I and Carey was only too glad to try and see what we could do. But it wasn't no snap. We wrote about eight letters before we got one that looked good. Then we give it to the stenographer and had it wrote out on a typewriter and both of us signed it.

It was Carey's idear that made the letter good. He stuck in somethin' about the world's serious money that our wives wasn't goin' to spend unless she took pity on a "boy who was so shy and modest that he was afraid to come right out and say that he had asked such a beautiful and handsome girl to become his bride."

That's prob'ly what got her, or maybe she couldn't of held out much longer anyway. It was four days after we sent the letter that Cap heard from his missus again. We was in Cincinnati.

"We've won," he says to us. "The old lady says that Dolly says she'll give him another chance. But the old lady says it won't do no good for Ike to write a letter. He'll have to go out there."

"Send him tonight," says Carey.

"I'll pay half his fare," I says.

"I'll pay the other half," says Carey.

"No," says Cap, "the club'll pay his expenses. I'll send him scoutin'."

"Are you goin' to send him tonight?"

"Sure," says Cap. "But I'm goin' to break the news to him right now. It's time we win a ball game."

So in the clubhouse, just before the game, Cap told him. And I certainly felt sorry for Rube Benton and Red Ames that afternoon. I and Carey was standin' in front o' the hotel that night when Ike come out with his suitcase.

"Sent home?" I says to him.

"No," he says, "I'm goin' scoutin'."

"Where to?" I says. "Fort Wayne?"

"No, not exactly," he says.

"Well," says Carey, "have a good time."

"I ain't lookin' for no good time," says Ike. "I says I was goin' scoutin'."

"Well, then," says Carey, "I hope you see somebody you like."

"And you better have a drink before you go," I says.

"Well," says Ike, "they claim it helps a cold."

# THE NEW BOY ARRIVES

from

TOM BROWN'S SCHOOLDAYS

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by THOMAS HUGHES

(1857)

*The match between the School house and the School described in this excerpt from Tom Brown's Schooldays is probably as well known as any single piece of writing on sport. One usually meets it early in life and apparently the verve of its telling and the author's unabashedly youthful approach (which later may make it hard to take for weary traveller, of the world) still get across to the youngsters. This is true despite the considerable fact that the rudimentary brand of Rugby Hughes delineate bears only a faint resemblance to the present day game. Well before Tom Brown's Schooldays was published in 1856 the modern age of sport, in which the team and team spirit were exalted, had arrived. No one before Hughes though had managed to capture it in writing and few have done it as well since. The way of life at Dr Arnold's Rugby was for Thomas Hughes the best way of life and it is not surprising that when his career in social reform led him many years later to set up an experimental colony in Tennessee he chose to name it Rugby.*

AS SOON AS DINNER WAS OVER, and Tom had been questioned by such of his neighbours as were curious as to his birth, parentage, education, and other like matters, East, who evidently enjoyed his new dignity of patron and mentor, proposed having a look at the close, which Tom, athirst for knowledge, gladly assented to and they went out through the quadrangle and past the big fives court, into the great playground.

"That's the chapel, you see," said East, "and there, just behind it, is the place for fights. You see it's just out of the way of the masters who all live on the other side, and don't come by here after first lesson or callings-over. That's when the fights come off. And all this part where we are is the little-side ground, right up to the trees, and on the other side of the trees is the big-side ground, where the great matches are played. And there's the island in the farthest corner. You'll know that

well enough next half, when there's island fagging. I say, it's horrid cold; let's have a run across." And away went East, Tom close behind him. East was evidently putting his best foot foremost, and Tom, who was mighty proud of his running, and not a little anxious to show his friend that, although a new boy, he was no milksop, laid himself down to work in his very best style. Right across the close they went, each doing all he knew, and there wasn't a yard between them when they pulled up at the island moat.

"I say," said East, as soon as he got his wind, looking with much increased respect at Tom, "you ain't a bag scud, not by any means. Well, I'm as warm as a toast now."

"But why do you wear white trousers in November?" said Tom. He had been struck by this peculiarity in the costume of almost all the School-house boys.

"Why, bless us, don't you know?" No. I forgot. Why, to-day's the School-house match. Our house plays the whole of the School at football. And we all wear white trousers to shew 'em we don't care for hacks. You're in luck to come to-day. You just will see a match, and Brooke's going to let me play in quarters. That's more than he'll do for any other lower school boy, except James, and he's fourteen."

"Who's Brooke?"

"Why, that big fellow who cycled over at dinner, to be sure. He's cock of the school, and head of the School-house side, and the best kick and charger in Rugby."

"Oh, but do show me where they play. And tell me about it. I love football so, and have played all my life. Won't Brooke let me play?"

"Not he," said East, with some indignation. "Why you don't know the rules, you'll be a month learning them. And then it's no joke playing-up in a match, I can tell you. Quite another thing from your private school games. Why, there's been two collar bones broken this half, and a dozen fellows lamed. And last year a fellow had his leg broken."

Tom listened with the profoundest respect to this chapter of accidents, and followed East across the level ground till they came to a sort of gigantic gallows of two poles, eighteen feet high, fixed upright in the ground some fourteen feet apart, with a cross-bar running from one to the other at the height of ten feet or thereabouts.

"This is one of the goals," said East, "and you see the other, across there, right opposite, under the Doctor's wall. Well, the match is for the best of three goals, whichever side kicks two goals wins, and it won't do, you see, just to kick the ball through these posts. It must go over the cross-bar; any height'll do, so long as it's between the posts. You'll have to stay in goal to touch the ball when it rolls behind the posts, be-

cause if the other side touch it they have a try at goal. Then we fellows in quarters, we play just about in front of goal here, and have to turn the ball and kick it back before the big fellows on the other side can follow it up. And in front of us all the big fellows play, and that's where the scrummages are mostly."

Tom's respect increased as he struggled to make out his friend's technicalities, and the other set to work to explain the mysteries of "off your side," "drop-kicks," "punts," "places," and the other intricacies of the great science of football.

"But how do you keep the ball between the goals?" said he, "I can't see why it mightn't go right down to the chapel."

"Why, that's out of play," answered Fast. "You see this gravel-walk running down all along this side of the playing ground, and the line of elms opposite on the other? Well, they're the bounds. As soon as the ball gets past them, it's in touch, and out of play. And then whoever first touches it has to knock it straight out amongst the players up, who make two lines with a space between them, every fellow going on his own side. Ain't there just fine scrummages then? And the three trees you see there which come out into the play, that's a tremendous place when the ball hangs there, for you get thrown against the trees, and that's worse than any hack."

Tom wondered within himself, as they strolled back again towards the lives court, whether the matches were really such break-neck affairs as East represented, and whether, if they were, he should ever get to like them and play up well.

He hadn't long to wonder, however, for next minute Fast cried out "Hurrah! here's the punt about, come along and try your hand at a kick." The punt-about is the practice ball which is just brought out and kicked about anyhow from one boy to another before calling over in dinner, and at other odd times. They joined the boys who had brought it out, and all small School-house fellows, friends of Fast and Tom had the pleasure of trying his skill, and performed very creditably, after first driving his foot three inches into the ground, and then nearly kicking his leg into the air, in vigorous efforts to accomplish a drop-kick in the manner of Fast.

Presently more boys and bigger came out, and boys from other houses on their way to calling-over, and more balls were sent for. The crowd thickened as three o'clock approached, and when the hour struck one hundred and fifty boys were hard at work. Then the balls were held, the master of the week came down in cap and gown to calling-over, and the whole school of three hundred boys swept into the big school to answer to their names.



"I may come in, mayn't I?" said Tom, catching East by the arm, and longing to feel one of them.

"Yes, come along; nobody'll say anything. You won't be so eager to get into calling-over after a month," replied his friend; and they marched into the big school together, and up to the farther end, where that illustrious form, the lower fourth, which had the honour of East's patronage for the time being, stood.

The master mounted into the high desk by the door, and one of the præpostors of the week stood by him on the steps, the other three marching up and down the middle of the school with their canes, calling out, "Silence, silence!" The sixth form stood close by the door on the left, some thirty in number, mostly great big grown men, as Tom thought, surveying them from a distance with awe; the fifth form behind them, twice their number, and not quite so big. These on the left; and on the right the lower fifth, shell, and all the junior forms in order; while up the middle marched the three præpostors.

Then the præpostor who stands by the master calls out the names, beginning with the sixth form, and as he calls each boy answers "here" to his name, and walks out. Some of the sixth stop at the door to turn the whole string of boys into the close. It is a great match-day, and every boy in the school, will he, nill he, must be there. The rest of the sixth go forwards into the close, to see that no one escapes by any of the side gates.

To-day, however, being the School-house match, none of the School-house præpostors stay by the door to watch for truants of their side; there is *carte blanche* to the School-house fags to go where they like. "They trust to our honour," as East proudly informs Tom; "they know very well that no School-house boy would cut the match. If he did, we'd very soon cut him, I can tell you."

The master of the week being short-sighted, and the præpostors of the week small and not well up to their work, the lower-school boys employ the ten minutes which elapse before their names are called in pelting one another vigorously with acorns, which fly about in all directions. The small præpostors dash in every now and then, and generally chastise some quiet, timid boy who is equally afraid of acorns and canes, while the principal performers get dexterously out of the way. And so calling-over rolls on, somehow, much like the big world, punishments lighting on wrong shoulders, and matters going generally in a queer, cross-grained way, but the end coming somehow, which is, after all, the great point. And now the master of the week has finished, and locked up the big school; and the præpostors of the week come out, sweeping the last remnant of the school fags, who had been loafing about the

corners by the fives court, in hopes of a chance of bolting, before them into the close.

"Hold the punt-about!" "To the goals!" are the cries; and all stray balls are impounded by the authorities, and the whole mass of boys moves up towards the two goals, dividing as they go into three bodies. That little band on the left, consisting of from fifteen to twenty boys, Tom amongst them, who are making for the goal under the School-house wall, are the School-house boys who are not to play up, and have to stay in goal. The larger body moving to the island goal are the School boys in a like predicament. The great mass in the middle are the players-up, both sides mingled together; they are hanging their jackets (and all who mean real work), their hats, waistcoats, neck-handkerchiefs, and braces, on the railings round the small trees; and there they go by twos and threes up to their respective grounds. There is none of the colour and tastiness of get-up, you will perceive, which lends such a life to the present game at Rugby, making the dullest and worst-fought match a pretty sight. Now each house has its own uniform of cap and jersey, of some lively colour; but at the time we are speaking of plush caps have not yet come in, or uniforms of any sort, except the School-house white trousers, which are abominably cold to-day. Let us get to work, bare-headed, and girded with our plain leather straps. But we mean business, gentlemen.

And now that the two sides have fairly sundered, and each occupies its own ground, and we get a good look at them, what absurdity is this? You don't mean to say that those fifty or sixty boys in white trousers, many of them quite small, are going to play that huge mass opposite? Indeed I do, gentlemen. They're going to try, at any rate, and won't make such a bad fight of it either, mark my word; for hasn't old Brooke won the toss, with his lucky halfpenny, and got choice of goals and kick-off? The new ball you may see lie there quite by itself, in the middle, pointing towards the School or island goal; in another minute it will be well on its way there. Use that minute in remarking how the School-house side is drilled. You will see, in the first place, that the sixth-form boy, who has the charge of goal, has spread his force (the goal-keepers) so as to occupy the whole space behind the goal-posts, at distances of about five yards apart. A safe and well-kept goal is the foundation of all good play. Old Brooke is talking to the captain of quarters; and now he moves away. See how that youngster spreads his men (the light brigade) carefully over the ground, half-way between their own goal and the body of their own players-up (the heavy brigade). These again play in several bodies. There is young Brooke and the bulldogs. Mark them well. They are the "fighting brigade," the "die-hards,"

larking about at leap-frog to keep themselves warm, and playing tricks on one another. And on either side of old Brooke, who is now standing in the middle of the ground and just going to kick off, you see a separate wing of players-up, each with a boy of acknowledged prowess to look to—here Warner, and there Hedge; but over all is old Brooke, absolute as he of Russia, but wisely and bravely ruling over willing and worshipping subjects, a true football king. His face is earnest and careful as he glances a last time over his array, but full of pluck and hope—the sort of look I hope to see in my general when I go out to fight.

The School side is not organized in the same way. The goal-keepers are all in lumps, anyhow and nohow, you can't distinguish between the players-up and the boys in quarters, and there is divided leadership. But with such odds in strength and weight it must take more than that to hinder them from winning, and so their leaders seem to think, for they let the players up manage themselves.

But now look! there is a slight move forward of the School-house wings, a shout of "Are you ready?" and loud affirmative reply. Old Brooke takes half a dozen quick steps, and away goes the ball spinning towards the School goal, seventy yards before it touches ground, and at no point above twelve or fifteen feet high, a model kick-off, and the School-house cheer and rush on. The ball is returned, and they meet it and drive it back amongst the masses of the School already in motion. Then the two sides close, and you can see nothing for minutes but a swaying crowd of boys, at one point violently agitated. That is where the ball is, and there are the keen players to be met, and the glory and the hard knocks to be got. You hear the dull thud, thud of the ball, and the shout of "Off your side!" "Down with him," "Put him over," "Bravo!" This is what we call "a scrummage," gentlemen, and the first scrummage in a School-house match was no joke in the consulship of Plancus.

But see! it has broken, the ball is driven out on the School-house side, and a rush of the School carries it past the School-house players-up. "Look out in quarters," Brooke's and twenty other voices ring out. No need to call, though the School-house captain of quarters has caught it on the bound, dodges the foremost School boys, who are heading the rush, and sends it back with a good drop-kick well into the enemy's country. And then follows rush upon rush, and scrummage upon scrummage, the ball now driven through into the School-house quarters, and now into the School goal, for the School-house have not lost the advantage which the kick-off and a slight wind gave them at the outset, and are slightly "penning" their adversaries. You say you don't see much in it all—nothing but a struggling mass of boys, and a leather ball which

seems to excite them all to great fury, as a red rag does a bull. My dear sir, a battle would look much the same to you, except that the boys would be men, and the balls iron, but a battle would be worth your looking at for all that, and so is a football match. You can't be expected to appreciate the delicate strokes of play, the turns by which a game is lost and won. It takes an old player to do that, but the broad philosophy of football you can understand if you will. Come along with me a little nearer, and let us consider it together.

The ball has just fallen again where the two sides are thickest, and they close rapidly around it in a scrummage. It must be driven through now by force or skill, till it flies out on one side or the other. Look how differently the boys face it! Here come two of the bull-dogs, bursting through the outsiders, in they go, straight to the heart of the scrummage bent on driving that ball out on the opposite side. That is what they mean to do. My sons, my sons! you are too hot. You have gone past the ball, and must struggle now right through the scrummage, and get round and back again to your own side, before you can be of any further use. There comes young Brooke. He goes in as straight as you, but keeps his head, and backs and bends, holding himself still behind the ball, and driving it furiously when he gets the chance. Take a leaf out of his book, you young chargers. Here comes Speedicut, and Flashman the School-house bully, with shouts and great action. Won't you two come up to young Brooke, after locking up, by the School-house fire, with "Old fellow, wasn't that just a splendid scrummage by the three trees?" But he knows you, and so do we. You don't really want to drive that ball through that scrummage, chanking all hurt for the glory of the School-house, but to make us throb. That's what you want. A vastly different thing, and fellows of your kidney will never go through more than the skirts of a scrummage, where it's all push and no kicking. We respect boys who keep out of it and don't sham going in, but you—we had rather not say what we think of you.

Then the boys who are bending and watching on the outside mark them. They are the most useful players, the dodgers, who seize on the ball the moment it rolls out from amongst the charges, and away with it across to the opposite goal. They seldom go into the scrummage, but must have more coolness than the chargers. As endless as are boys' characters, so are their ways of facing or not facing a scrummage in football.

Three-quarters of an hour are gone, first winds are failing, and weight and numbers beginning to tell. Yard by yard the School-house have been driven back, contesting every inch of the ground. The bull-dogs are the colour of mother earth from shoulder to ankle except young

Brooke, who has a marvellous knack of keeping his legs. The School-house are being penned in their turn, and now the ball is behind their goal, under the Doctor's wall. The Doctor and some of his family are there looking on, and seem as anxious as any boy for the success of the School-house. We get a minute's breathing time before old Brooke kicks out, and he gives the word to play strongly for touch, by the three trees. Away goes the ball, and the bull-dogs after it, and in another minute there is shout of "In touch!" "Our ball!" Now's your time, old Brooke, while your men are still fresh. He stands with the ball in his hand, while the two sides form in deep lines opposite one another; he must strike it straight out between them. The lines are thickest close to him, but young Brooke and two or three of his men are shifting up farther, where the opposite line is weak. Old Brooke strikes it out straight and strong, and it falls opposite his brother. Hurrah! that rush has taken it right through the School line, and away past the three trees, far into their quarters, and young Brooke and the bull-dogs are close upon it. The School leaders rush back, shouting, "Look out in goal!" and strain every nerve to catch him, but they are after the fleetest foot in Rugby. There they go straight for the School goal-posts, quarters scattering before them. One after another the bull-dogs go down, but young Brooke holds on. "He is down." No! a long stagger, but the danger is past. That was the shock of Crew, the most dangerous of dodgers. And now he is close to the School goal, the ball not three yards before him. There is a hurried rush of the School fags to the spot, but no one throws himself on the ball, the only chance, and young Brooke has touched it right under the School goal-posts.

The School leaders come up furious, and administer to the wretched fags nearest at hand. They may well be angry, for it is all Lombard Street to a china orange that the School-house kick a goal with the ball touched in such a good place. Old Brooke, of course, will kick it out, but who shall catch and place it? Call Crab Jones. Here he comes; sauntering along with a straw in his mouth, the queerest, coolest fish in Rugby. If he were tumbled into the moon this minute, he would just pick himself up without taking his hands out of his pockets or turning a hair. But it is a moment when the boldest charger's heart beats quick. Old Brooke stands with the ball under his arm motioning the School back; he will not kick out till they are all in goal, behind the posts. They are all edging forwards, inch by inch, to get nearer for the rush at Crab Jones, who stands there in front of old Brooke to catch the ball. If they can reach and destroy him before he catches, the danger is over; and with one and the same rush they will carry it right away to the School-house goal. Fond hope! it is kicked out and caught beautifully.

Crab strikes his heel into the ground, to mark the spot where the ball was caught, beyond which the School line may not advance; but there they stand, five deep, ready to rush the moment the ball touches the ground. Take plenty of room. Don't give the rush a chance of reaching you. Place it true and steady. Trust Crab Jones. He has made a small hole with his heel for the ball to lie on, by which he is resting on one knee, with his eye on old Brooke. "Now!" Crab places the ball at the word, old Brooke kicks, and it rises slowly and truly as the School rush forward.

Then a moment's pause, while both sides look up at the spinning ball. There it flies, straight between the two posts, some five feet above the cross-bar, an unquestioned goal; and a shout of real, genuine joy rings out from the School-house players-up, and a faint echo of it comes over the close from the goal-keepers under the Doctor's wall. A goal in the first hour--such a thing hasn't been done in the School-house match these five years.

"Over!" is the cry. The two sides change goals, and the School-house goal-keepers come threading their way across through the masses of the School, the most openly triumphant of them--amongst whom is Tom, a School-house boy of two hours' standing--getting their ears boxed in the transit. Tom indeed is excited beyond measure, and it is all the sixth-form boy, kindest and safest of goal-keepers, has been able to do, to keep him from rushing out whenever the ball has been near their goal. So he holds him by his side, and instructs him in the science of touching.

At this moment Griffith, the itinerant vender of oranges from Hill Morton, enters the close with his heavy baskets. There is a rush of small boys upon the little pale-faced man, the two sides mingling together, subdued by the great goddess Thirst, like the English and French by the streams in the Pyrenees. The leaders are past oranges and apples, but some of them visit their coats, and apply innocent-looking ginger beer bottles to their mouths. It is no ginger-beer though, I fear, and will do you no good. One short mad rush, and then a stitch in the side, and no more honest play. That's what comes of those bottles.

But now Griffith's baskets are empty, the ball is placed again midway, and the School are going to kick off. Their leaders have sent their lumber into goal, and rated the rest soundly, and one hundred and twenty picked players-up are there, bent on retrieving the game. They are to keep the ball in front of the School-house goal, and then to drive it in by sheer strength and weight. They mean heavy play and no mistake, and so old Brooke sees, and places Crab Jones in quarters just before the goal, with four or five picked players who are to keep the ball away to the sides, where a try at goal, if obtained, will be less dangerous than

in front. He himself, and Warner and Hedge, who have saved themselves till now, will lead the charges

"Are you ready?" "Yes." And away comes the ball, kicked high in the air, to give the School time to rush on and catch it as it falls. And here they are amongst us. Meet them like Englishmen, you School-house boys, and charge them home. Now is the time to show what mettle is in you, and there shall be a warm seat by the hall fire, and honour, and lots of bottled beer to-night for him who does his duty in the next half-hour. And they are well met. Again and again the cloud of their players-up gathers before our goal, and comes threatening on, and Warner or Hedge, with young Brooke and the relics of the bulldogs, break through and carry the ball back, and old Brooke ranges the field like Job's war-horse. The thickest scrummage parts asunder before his rush, like the waves before a clipper's bows, his cheery voice rings out over the field, and his eye is everywhere. And if these miss the ball, and it rolls dangerously in front of our goal, Crab Jones and his men have seized it and sent it away towards the sides with the unerring drop kick. This is worth living for—the whole sum of school-boy existence gathered up into one straining, struggling half hour, a half-hour worth a year of common life.

The quarter to five has struck, and the play slackens for a minute before goal, but there's Crew, the artful dodger, driving the ball in behind our goal, on the island side, where our quarters are weakest. Is there no one to meet him? Yes, look at little East! The ball is just at equal distances between the two, and they rush together, the young man of seventeen and the boy of twelve, and kick it at the same moment. Crew passes on without a stagger. East is hurled forward by the shock, and plunges on his shoulder, as if he would bury himself in the ground, but the ball rises straight into the air, and falls behind Crew's back, while the "bravoes" of the School house attest the pluckiest charge of all that hard fought day. Warner picks East up lame and half stunned, and he hobbles back into goal, conscious of having played the man.

And now the last minutes are come, and the School gather for their last rush, every boy of the hundred and twenty who has a run left in him. Reckless of the defence of their own goal, on they come across the level big-side ground, the ball well down amongst them, straight for our goal, like the column of the Old Guard up the slope at Waterloo. All former charges have been child's play to this. Warner and Hedge have met them, but still on they come. The bull-dogs rush in for the last time; they are hurled over or carried back, striving hand, foot, and eyelids. Old Brooke comes sweeping round the skirts of the play, and turning short round, picks out the very heart of the scrummage, and plunges in

It wavers for a moment; he has the ball. No, it has passed him, and his voice rings out clear over the advancing tide, "Look out in goal!" Crab Jones catches it for a moment; but before he can kick, the rush is upon him and passes over him; and he picks himself up behind them with his straw in his mouth, a little dirtier, but as cool as ever.

The ball rolls slowly in behind the School-house goal, not three yards in front of a dozen of the biggest School players-up.

There stands the School-house præpostor, safest of goal-keepers, and Tom Brown by his side, who has learned his trade by this time. Now is your time, Tom. The blood of all the Browns is up, and the two rush in together, and throw themselves on the ball, under the very feet of the advancing column—the præpostor on his hands and knees, arching his back, and Tom all along on his face. Over them topple the leaders of the rush, shooting over the back of the præpostor, but falling flat on Tom, and knocking all the wind out of his small carcass. "Our ball, ' says the præpostor, rising with his prize; "but get up there; there's a little fellow under you." They are hauled and roll off him, and Tom is discovered, a motionless body.

Old Brooke picks him up. "Stand back, give him air," he says; and then feeling his limbs, adds, "No bones broken.—How do you feel, young un?"

"Hah-hah!" gasps Tom, as his wind comes back; "pretty well, thank you—all right."

"Who is he?" says Brooke.

"Oh, it's Brown; he's a new boy; I know him," says East, coming up.

"Well, he is a plucky youngster, and will make a player," says Brooke.

And five o'clock strikes. "No side" is called, and the first day of the School-house match is over.



# MR. FEASEY

by ROALD DAHL

*Roald Dahl is curiously (and splendidly) old fashioned, when viewed among contemporary short story writers: he is an out-and-out storyteller, and his stories not only have definite plots but each plot has a beginning, a middle and an end. While not as macabre as most of Dahl's work, Mr Feasey is just as sombre in mood. When you have finished reading it you will find incidentally that you know more about greyhound racing than you ever intended to.*

**W**E WERE both up early when the big day came. I wandered into the kitchen for a shave, but Claud got dressed right away and went outside to arrange about the straw. Through the kitchen window, I could see the sun just coming up behind the line of trees on top of the ridge the other side of the valley.

Each time Claud came past the window with an armload of straw, I noticed over the rim of the mirror the intent, breathless expression on his face, the great round bullethead thrusting forward and the forehead wrinkled into deep corrugations right up to the hairline. I'd only seen this look on him once before and that was the evening he'd asked Clarice to marry him. Today he was so excited he even walked funny, treading softly as though the concrete around the filling station were a shade too hot for the soles of his feet, and he kept packing more and more straw into the back of the van to make it comfortable for Jackie.

Then he came into the kitchen to fix breakfast, and I watched him put the pot of soup on the stove and begin stirring it. He had a long metal spoon and he kept on stirring and stirring, and about every half-minute he leaned forward and stuck his nose into that sickly-sweet

steam of cooking horseflesh. Then he started putting extras into it—three peeled onions, a few young carrots, a cupful of stinging-nettle tops, a teaspoon of Valentine's Meat Extract, twelve drops of cod-liver oil—and everything he touched was handled very gently with the ends of his big fat fingers as though it might have been a little fragment of Venetian glass. He took some minced horse meat from the icebox, measured one handful into Jackie's bowl, three into the other, and when the soup was ready he shared it out between the two, pouring it over the meat.

It was the same ceremony I'd seen performed each morning for the past five months, but never with such breathless concentration as this. There was no talk, not even a glance my way, and when he turned and went out again to fetch the dogs, even the back of his neck and his shoulders seemed to be whispering, "Oh, Jesus, don't let anything go wrong, and especially don't let me *do* anything wrong today."

I heard him talking softly to the dogs in the pen as he put the leashes on them, and when he brought them around into the kitchen, they came in prancing and pulling to get at the breakfast, treading up and down with their front feet and waving their enormous tails from side to side like whips.

"All right," Claud said, speaking at last. "Which is it?"

Most mornings he'd offer to bet me a pack of cigarettes, but there were bigger things at stake today, and I knew all he wanted for the moment was a little extra reassurance.

He watched me as I walked once around the two beautiful, identical, tall, velvety-black dogs, and he moved aside, holding the leashes at arm's length to give me a better view.

"Jackie!" I said, trying the old trick that never worked. "Hey Jackie!" Two identical heads with identical expressions flicked around to look at me, four bright, identical, deep-yellow eyes stared into mine. There'd been a time when I fancied the eyes of one were a slightly darker yellow than those of the other. There'd also been a time when I thought I could recognize Jackie because of a deeper bricket and a shade more muscle on the hindquarters. But it wasn't so.

"Come on," Claud said. He was hoping that today of all days I would make a bad guess.

"This one," I said. "This is Jackie."

"Which?"

"This one on the left."

"There!" he cried, his whole face suddenly beaming. "You're wrong again!"

"I don't think I'm wrong."

"You're about as wrong as you could possibly be. And now listen, Gordon, and I'll tell you something. All these last weeks, every morning while you've been trying to pick him out—you know what?"

"What?"

"I've been keeping count. And the result is you haven't been right even *one-half* the time! You'd have done better tossing a coin!"

What he meant was that if I (who saw them every day and side by side) couldn't do it, why the hell should we be frightened of Mr. Feasey? Claud knew Mr. Feasey was famous for spotting ringers, but he knew also that it could be very difficult to tell the difference between two dogs when there wasn't any.

He put the bowls of food on the floor, giving Jackie the one with the least meat because he was running today. When he stood back to watch them eat, the shadow of deep concern was back again on his face and the large pale eyes were staring at Jackie with the same rapt and melting look of love that up till recently had been reserved only for Charlie.

"You see, Gordon," he said. "It's just what I've always told you. For the last hundred years, there's been all manner of ringers, some good and some bad, but in the whole history of dog racing there's never been a ringer like this."

"I hope you're right," I said, and my mind began traveling back to that freezing afternoon just before Christmas, when Claud had asked to borrow the van and had driven away in the direction of Aylesbury without saying where he was going. I had assumed he was off to see Charlie, but late in the afternoon he had returned bringing with him this dog he said he'd bought off a man for thirty-five shillings.

"Is he fast?" I had said. We were standing out by the pumps and Claud was holding the dog on a leash and looking at him, and a few snowflakes were falling and settling on the dog's back. The motor of the van was still running.

"Fast!" Claud had said. "He's just about the slowest dog you ever saw in your whole life!"

"Then what you buy him for?"

"Well," he had said, the big bovine face secret and cunning, "it occurred to me that maybe he might possibly look a little bit like Jackie. What d'you think?"

"I suppose he does a bit, now you come to mention it."

He had handed me the leash and I had taken the new dog inside to dry him off while Claud had gone round to the pen to fetch his beloved. And when he returned and we put the two of them together for the first time, I can remember him stepping back and saying,

"Oh, Jesus!" and standing dead still in front of them like he was seeing a phantom. Then he became very quick and quiet. He got down on his knees and began comparing them carefully point by point, and it was almost like the room was getting warmer and warmer the way I could feel his excitement growing every second through this long silent examination in which even the toenails and the dewclaws, eighteen on each dog, were matched alongside one another for color.

"Look," he had said at last, standing up. "Walk them up and down the room a few times, will you?" And then he had stayed there for quite five or six minutes leaning against the stove with his eyes half closed and his head on one side, watching them and frowning and chewing his lips. After that, as though he didn't believe what he had seen the first time, he had gone down again on his knees to recheck everything once more, but suddenly, in the middle of it, he had jumped up and looked at me, his face fixed and tense, with a curious whiteness around the nostrils and the eyes. "All right," he had said, a little tremor in his voice. "You know what? We're home. We're rich."

And then the secret conferences between us in the kitchen, the detailed planning, the selection of the most suitable track, and finally every other Saturday, eight times in all, locking up my filling station (losing a whole afternoon's custom) and driving the ringer all the way up to Oxford to a scruffy little track out in the fields near Headingley where the big money was played but which was actually nothing except a line of old posts and cord to mark the course, an upturned bicycle for pulling the dummy hare, and at the far end, in the distance, six traps and the starter. We had driven this ringer up there eight times over a period of sixteen weeks and entered him with Mr. Feasey and stood around on the edge of the crowd in the freezing raining cold, waiting for his name to go up on the blackboard in chalk. The Black Panther we called him. And when his time came, Claud would always lead him down to the traps and I would stand at the finish to catch him and keep him clear of the fighters, the gypsy dogs that the gypsies so often slipped in specially to tear another one to pieces at the end of a race.

But you know, there was something rather sad about taking this dog all the way up there so many times and letting him run and watching him and hoping and praying that whatever happened he would always come last. Of course, the praying wasn't necessary and we never really had a moment's worry because the old fellow simply couldn't gallop and that's all there was to it. He ran exactly like a crab. The only time he didn't come last was when a big fawn dog by the name of Amber Flash put his foot in a hole and broke a hock and

finished on three legs. But even then ours only just beat him. So this way we got him right down to bottom grade with the scrubbers, and the last time we were there all the bookies were laying him twenty or thirty to one and calling his name and begging people to back him.

Now at last, today, on this sunny day, it was Jackie's turn to go instead. Claud said we mustn't run the ringer any more or Mr. Feasey might begin to get tired of him and throw him out altogether, he was so slow. Claud said this was the exact psychological time to have it off, and that Jackie would win it anything between thirty and fifty lengths.

He had raised Jackie from a pup and the dog was only fifteen months now, but he was a good fast runner. He'd never raced yet, but we knew he was fast from clocking him round the little private schooling track at Uxbridge where Claud had taken him every Sunday since he was seven months old—except once when he was having some inoculations. Claud said he probably wasn't fast enough to win top grade at Mr. Feasey's, but where we'd got him now, in bottom grade with the scrubbers, he could fall over and get up again and still win it twenty—well, anyway ten or fifteen lengths.

So all I had to do this morning was go to the bank in the village and draw out fifty pounds for myself and fifty for Claud, which I would lend him as an advance against wages, and then at twelve o'clock lock up the filling station and hang the notice on one of the pumps saying "GONE FOR THE DAY." Claud would shut the ringer in the pen at the back and put Jackie in the van and off we'd go. I won't say I was as excited about it as Claud, but there again, I didn't have all sorts of important things depending on it either, like buying a house and being able to get married. Nor was I almost *born* in a kennel with greyhounds like he was, walking about thinking of absolutely nothing else—except perhaps Clarice in the evenings. Personally, I had my own career as a filling-station owner to keep me busy, not to mention secondhand cars, but if Claud wanted to fool around with dogs that was all right with me, especially a thing like today—if it came off. As a matter of fact, I don't mind admitting that every time I thought about the money we were putting on and the money we might win, my stomach gave a little lurch.

The dogs had finished their breakfast now and Claud took them out for a short walk across the field opposite while I got dressed and fried the eggs. Afterward, I went to the bank and drew out the money (all in ones), and the rest of the morning seemed to go very quickly serving customers.

At twelve sharp, I locked up and hung the notice on the pump.

Claud came around from the back leading Jackie and carrying a large suitcase made of reddish-brown cardboard.

"Suitcase?"

"For the money," Claud answered. "You said yourself no man can carry two thousand pounds in his pockets."

Jackie looked wonderful, with two big hard muscles the size of melons bulging on his hindquarters, his coat glistening like black velvet. While Claud was putting the suitcase in the van, the dog did a little prancing jig on his toes to show how fit he was, then he looked up at me and grinned, just like he knew he was off to the races to win two thousand pounds and a heap of glory.

We got in the van and off we went. I was doing the driving. Claud was beside me and Jackie was standing up on the straw in the rear looking over our shoulders through the windshield. Claud kept turning round and trying to make him lie down so he wouldn't get thrown whenever we went round the sharp corners, but the dog was too excited to do anything except grin back at him and wave his enormous tail.

"You got the money, Gordon?" Claud was chain-smoking cigarettes and quite unable to sit still.

"Yes."

"Mine as well?"

"I got a hundred and five altogether. Five for the winder like you said, so he won't stop the hare and make it a no race."

"Good," Claud said, rubbing his hands together hard as though he were freezing cold. "Good good good."

We drove through the little narrow High Street of Great Missenden and caught a glimpse of old Rummins going into the Nag's Head for his morning pint, then outside the village we turned left and climbed over the ridge of the Chilterns toward Princes Risborough, and from there it would only be twenty-odd miles to Oxford.

And now a silence and a kind of tension began to come over us both. We sat very quiet, not speaking at all, each nursing his own fears and excitements, containing his anxiety. And Claud kept smoking his cigarettes and throwing them half finished out the window. Usually, on these trips, he talked his head off all the way there and back, all the things he'd done with dogs in his life, the jobs he'd pulled, the places he'd been, the money he'd won; and all the things other people had done with dogs, the thievery, the cruelty, the unbelievable trickery and cunning of owners at the flapping tracks. But today I don't think he was trusting himself to speak very much. At this point, for that matter, nor was I. I was sitting there watching the road, and trying to

keep my mind off the immediate future by thinking back on all that stuff Claud had told me about this curious greyhound-racing racket.

I swear there wasn't a man alive who knew more about it than Claud did, and ever since we'd got the ringer and decided to pull this job, he'd taken it upon himself to give me an education in the business. By now, in theory at any rate, I suppose I knew nearly as much as him

It had started during the very first strategy conference we'd had in the kitchen. I can remember it was the day after the ringer arrived and we were sitting there watching for customers through the window, and Claud was explaining to me all about what we'd have to do, and I was trying to follow him as best I could until finally there came one question I had to ask him.

"What I don't see," I had said, "is why you use the ringer at all. Wouldn't it be safer if we use Jackie all the time and simply stop him the first half-dozen races so he come last? Then when we're good and ready, we can let him go. Same result in the end, wouldn't it be, if we do it right? And no danger of being caught."

Well, as I say, that did it. Claud looked up at me quickly and said, "Hey! None of that! I'd just like you to know stopping's something I never do. What's come over you, Gordon?" He seemed genuinely pained and shocked by what I had said.

"I don't see anything wrong with it."

"Now listen to me, Gordon. Stopping a good dog breaks his heart. A good dog knows he's fast, and seeing all the others out there in front and not being able to catch them—it breaks his heart, I tell you. And what's more, you wouldn't be making suggestions like that if you knew some of the tricks them fellers do to stop their dogs at the flapping tracks."

"Such as what, for example?" I had asked.

"Such as anything in the world almost, so long as it makes the dog go slower. And it takes a lot of stopping, a good greyhound does. Full of guts and so mad keen you can't even let them watch a race they'll tear the leash right out of your hand rearing to go. Many's the time I've seen one with a broken leg insisting on finishing the race."

He had paused then, looking at me thoughtfully with those large pale eyes, serious as hell and obviously thinking deep. "Maybe," he had said, "if we're going to do this job properly I'd better tell you a thing or two so's you'll know what we're up against."

"Go ahead and tell me," I had said. "I'd like to know."

For a moment he stared in silence out the window, and his face began slowly to assume the expression of a man who possesses dan-

gerous secrets. "The main thing you got to remember," he had said, "is that all these fellers going to the flapping tracks with dogs—they're artful. They're more artful than you could possibly imagine." Again he paused, marshaling his thoughts.

"Now take for example the different ways of stopping a dog. The first, the commonest, is strapping."

"Strapping?"

"Yes. Strapping 'em up. That's commonest. Pulling the muzzle strap tight around their necks so they can't hardly breathe. See a clever man knows just which hole on the strap to use and just how many lengths it'll take off his dog in a race. Usually a couple of notches is good for five or six lengths. Do it up real tight and he'll come last. I've known plenty of dogs collapse and die from being strapped up tight on a hot day. Strangled—absolutely strangled, and a very nasty thing it was, too. Then again, some of 'em just tie two of the toes together with black cotton. Dog never runs well like that. Unbalances him."

"That doesn't sound too bad."

"Then there's others that put a piece of fresh-chewed gum up under their tails, right up close where the tail joins the body. And there's nothing funny about that," he had said, indignant. "The tail of a running dog goes up and down ever so slightly and the gum on the tail keeps sticking to the hairs on the backside, just where it's tenderest. No dog likes that, you know. Then there's sleeping pills. That's used a lot nowadays. They do it by weight, exactly like a doctor, and they measure the powder according to whether they want to slow him up five or ten or fifteen lengths. Those are just a few of the ordinary ways," he had said. "Actually, they're nothing. Absolutely nothing compared with some of the other things that's done to hold a dog back in a race, especially by the gypsies. There's things the gypsies do that are almost too disgusting to mention, such as when they're just putting the dog in the trap, things you wouldn't hardly do to your worst enemies."

And when he had told me about those—which were, indeed, terrible things because they had to do with physical injury, quickly, painfully inflicted—he had gone on to tell me what they did when they wanted the dog to win.

"There's just as terrible things done to make 'em go fast as to make 'em go slow," he had said softly, his face veiled and secret. "And perhaps commonest of all is wintergreen. Whenever you see a dog going around with no hair on his back or little bald patches all over him—that's wintergreen. Just before the race, they rub it hard



into the skin. Sometimes it's Sloan's liniment, but mostly it's wintergreen. Stings terrible. Stings so bad that all the old dog wants to do is run run run as fast as he possibly can to get away from the pain.

"Then there's special drugs they give with the needle. Mind you, that's the modern method and most of the spivs at the track are too ignorant to use it. It's the fellers coming down from London in the big cars with stadium dogs they've borrowed for the day by bribing the trainer—they're the ones use the needle."

I could remember him sitting there at the kitchen table with a cigarette dangling from his mouth and dropping his eyelids to keep out the smoke and looking at me through his wrinkled, nearly closed eyes, and saying, "What you've got to remember, Gordon, is this. There's nothing they won't do to make a dog win if they want him to. On the other hand, no dog can run faster than he's built, no matter what they do to him. So if we can get Jackie down into bottom grade, then we're home. No dog in bottom grade can get near him, not even with wintergreen and needles."

And so it had gone on. During each of the eight long trips we had subsequently made to the track with the ringer, I had heard more and more about this charming sport—more, especially, about the methods of stopping them and making them go (even the names of the drugs and the quantities to use). I heard about the "rat treatment" (for non-chasers, to make them chase the dummy hare), where a rat is placed in a can which is then tied around the dog's neck. There's a small hole in the lid of the can just large enough for the rat to poke its head out and nip the dog. But the dog can't get at the rat, and so naturally he goes half crazy running around and being bitten in the neck, and the more he shakes the can the more the rat bites him. Finally, someone releases the rat, and the dog, who up to then was a nice docile tail-wagging animal who wouldn't hurt a mouse, pounces on it in a rage and tears it to pieces. Do this a few times, Claud had said—"mind you, I don't hold with it myself"—and the dog becomes a real killer who will chase anything, even the dummy hare.

We were over the Chilterns now and running down out of the beechwoods into the flat elm-and-oak-tree country south of Oxford. Claud sat quietly beside me, nursing his nervousness and smoking cigarettes, and every two or three minutes he would turn round to see if Jackie was all right. The dog was at last lying down, and each time Claud turned round, he whispered something to him softly, and the dog acknowledged his words with a faint movement of the tail that made the straw rustle.

Soon we would be coming into Thame, the broad High Street where

they penned the pigs and cows and sheep on market day, and where the fair came once a year with the swings and roundabouts and bumping cars and gypsy caravans right there in the street in the middle of the town. Claud was born in Thame, and we'd never driven through it yet without him mentioning this fact.

"Well," he said as the first houses came into sight, "here's Thame. I was born and bred in Thame, you know, Gordon."

"You told me."

"Lots of funny things we used to do around here when we was nippers," he said, slightly nostalgic.

"I'm sure."

He paused, and I think more to relieve the tension building up inside him than anything else, he began talking about the years of his youth.

"There was a boy next door," he said. "Gilbert Gomm his name was. Little sharp ferrety face and one leg a bit shorter'n the other. Shocking things him and me used to do together. You know one thing we done, Gordon?"

"What?"

"We'd go into the kitchen Saturday nights when Mum and Dad were at the pub, and we'd disconnect the pipe from the gas ring and bubble the gas into a milk bottle full of water. Then we'd sit down and drink it out of teacups."

"Was that so good?"

"Good! It was disgusting! But we'd put lashings of sugar in and then it didn't taste so bad."

"Why did you drink it?"

Claud turned and looked at me, incredulous. "You mean you never drunk Snake's Water!"

"Can't say I have."

"I thought everyone done that when they was kids! It intoxicates you, just like wine only worse, depending on how long you let the gas bubble through. We used to get reeling drunk together there in the kitchen Saturday nights and it was marvelous. Until one night Dad comes home early and catches us. I'll never forget that night as long as I live. There was me holding the milk bottle, and the gas bubbling through it lovely, and Gilbert kneeling off the floor ready to turn off the tap the moment I give the word, and in walks Dad."

"What did he say?"

"Oh, Christ, Gordon, that was terrible. He didn't say one word, but he stands there by the door and he starts feeling for his belt, undoing the buckle very slow and pulling the belt slow out of his trou-

sers, looking at me all the time. Great big feller he was, with great big hands like coal hammers and a black mustache and them little purple veins running all over his cheeks. Then he comes over quick and grabs me by the coat and lets me have it, hard as he can, using the end with the buckle on it, and honest to God, Gordon, I thought he was going to kill me. But in the end he stops and then he puts on the belt again, slow and careful, buckling it up and tucking in the flap and belching with the beer he's drunk. And then he walks out again back to the pub, still without saying a word. Worst hiding I ever had in my life."

"How old were you then?"

"Round about eight, I should think," Claud said.

As we drew closer to Oxford, he became silent again. He kept twisting his neck to see if Jackie was all right, to touch him, to stroke his head, and once he turned around and knelt on the seat to gather more straw around the dog, murmuring something about a draft. We drove around the fringe of Oxford and into a network of narrow country roads, and after a while we turned in to a small bumpy lane and along this we began to overtake a thin stream of men and women all walking and cycling in the same direction. Some of the men were leading greyhounds. There was a large saloon car in front of us and through the rear window we could see a dog sitting on the back seat between two men.

"They come from all over," Claud said. "That one there's probably come up special from London. Probably slipped him out from one of the big stadium kennels just for the afternoon. That could be a Derby dog probably for all we know."

"Hope he's not running against Jackie."

"Don't worry," Claud said. "All new dogs automatically go in top grade. That's one rule Mr Feasey's very particular about."

There was an open gate leading into a field and Mr Feasey's wife came forward to take our admission money before we drove in.

"He'd have her winding the bloody pedals, too, if she had the strength," Claud said. "Old Feasey don't employ more people than he has to."

"I drove across the field and parked at the end of a line of cars along the top hedge. We both got out and Claud went quickly round the back to fetch Jackie. I stood beside the van, waiting. It was a very large field with a steepish slope on it, and we were at the top of the slope, looking down. In the distance, I could see the six starting traps and the wooden posts marking the track which ran along the bottom of the field and turned sharp at right angles and came on

up the hill toward the crowd, to the finish. Thirty yards beyond the finishing line stood the upturned bicycle for driving the hare. Because it is portable, this is the standard machine for hare driving used at all flapping tracks. It comprises a flimsy wooden platform about eight feet high, supported on four poles knocked into the ground. On top of the platform, there is fixed, upside down with wheels in the air, an ordinary old bicycle. The rear wheel is to the front, facing down the track, and from it the tire has been removed, leaving a concave metal rim. One end of the cord that pulls the hare is attached to this rim, and the winder (or hare driver), by straddling the bicycle at the back and turning the pedals with his hands, revolves the wheel and winds in the cord around the rim. This pulls the dummy hare toward him at any speed he likes up to forty miles an hour. After each race, someone takes the dummy hare (with cord attached) all the way down to the starting traps again, thus unwinding the cord on the wheel, ready for a fresh start. From his high platform, the winder can watch the whole race and regulate the speed of the hare to keep it just ahead of the leading dog. He can also stop the hare any time he wants and make it a "no race" (if the wrong dog looks like winning) by suddenly turning the pedals backward and getting the cord tangled up in the hub of the wheel. The other way of doing it is to slow down the hare suddenly, for perhaps one second, and that makes the lead dog automatically check a little so that the others catch up with him. He is an important man, the winder.

I could see Mr. Feasey's winder already standing atop his platform, a powerful-looking man in a blue sweater, leaning on the bicycle and looking down at the crowd through the smoke of his cigarette.

There is a curious law in England which permits race meetings of this kind to be held only seven times a year over one piece of ground. That is why all Mr. Feasey's equipment was movable, after the seventh meeting he would simply transfer to the next field. The law didn't bother him at all.

There was already a good crowd, and the bookmakers were erecting their stands in a line over to the right. Claud had Jackie out of the van now and was leading him over to a group of people clustered around a small stocky man dressed in riding breeches—Mr. Feasey himself. Each person in the group had a dog on a leash and Mr. Feasey kept writing names in a notebook that he held in his left hand. I sauntered over to watch.

"Which you got there?" Mr. Feasey said, pencil poised above the notebook.

"Midnight," a man said who was holding a black dog.

Mr. Feasey stepped back a pace and looked most carefully at the dog.

"Midnight Right I got him down "

"Jane," the next man said

"Let me look Jane Jane . . . yes, all right "

"Soldier " This dog was led by a tall man with long teeth who wore a dark-blue, double-breasted lounge suit

Mr Feasey bent down to examine the dog. The other man looked up at the sky

"Take him away ' Mr Feasey said.

The man looked down quick

' Go on take him away "

' Listen Mr Feasey,' the man said, ' now don't talk so bloody silly please

' Go on and beat it I arry, and stop wasting my time You know as well as I do the Soldier s got two white toes on his off fore '

' Now look Mr Feasey,' the man said "You ain't even seen Soldier for six montns at least '

"Come on now Larry and beat it I haven't got time arguing with you " Mr Feasey didn't appear in the least angry

"Next," he said

I saw Claud step forward leading Jackie The large bovine face was fixed and wooden the eyes staring at something about a yard above Mr Feasey's head, and he was holding the leash so tight his knuckles were like a row of little white onions

Mr Feasey sudd nly started laughing "Hey!" he cried "Here's the Black Panther Here's the champion "

"That's right Mr Feasey Claud said

"Well, I'll tell you Mr Feasey said "You can take him right back home where he come from I don't want him "

"But look here, Mr Feasey—"

"Six or eight times at least I've run him for you now and that's enough Look—why don't you shoot him and have done with it?"

"Now listen, Mr Feasey, please Just once more and I'll never ask you again "

"Not even once! I got more dogs than I can handle here today. There's no room for crabs like that "

I thought Claud was going to cry

"Now honest, Mr Feasey," he said ' I been up at six every morning this past two weeks giving him roadwork and massage and buying him beefsteaks, and believe me he's a different dog absolutely than what he was last time he run "

"Just the same, you can take him away. There's no sense running dogs as slow as him. Take him home now, will you please, and don't hold up the whole meeting."

I was watching Claud. Claud was watching Mr. Feasey. Mr. Feasey was looking round for the next dog to enter up. Under his brown tweedy jacket he wore a yellow pullover, and this streak of yellow on his breast and his thin gartered legs and the way he jerked his head from side to side made him seem like some sort of a little perky bird—a goldfinch, perhaps.

Claud took a step forward. His face was beginning to purple slightly.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Mr. Feasey. I'm so absolutely sure this dog's improved I'll bet you a quid he don't finish last. There you are."

Mr. Feasey turned slowly round and looked at Claud. "You crackers?" he asked.

"I'll bet you a quid, there you are, just to prove what I'm saying."

It was a dangerous move, certain to cause suspicion, but Claud knew it was the only thing left to do. There was silence while Mr. Feasey bent down and examined the dog. I could see the way his eyes were moving slowly over the animal's whole body, part by part. There was something to admire in the man's thoroughness, and in his memory, something to fear also in this self-confident little rogue who held in his head the shape and color and markings of perhaps several hundred different but very similar dogs. He never needed more than one little clue—a small scar, a splay toe, a trifle in at the hocks, a less pronounced wheelback, a slightly darker brindle; Mr. Feasey always remembered.

So I watched him now as he bent down over Jackie. His face was pink and fleshy, the mouth small and tight as though it couldn't stretch enough to make a smile, and the eyes were like two little cameras focused sharply on the dog.

"Well," he said, straightening up. "It's the same dog anyway."

"I should hope so, too!" Claud cried. "Just what sort of a feller you think I am, Mr. Feasey?"

"I think you're crackers, that's what I think. But it's a nice easy way to make a quid. I suppose you forgot how Amber Flash nearly beat him on three legs last meeting?"

"This one wasn't fit then," Claud said. "He hadn't had beefsteak and massage and roadwork like I've been giving him lately. But look, Mr. Feasey, you're not to go sticking him in top grade just to win the bet. This is a bottom-grade dog, Mr. Feasey. You know that."

Mr. Feasey laughed. The small button mouth opened into a tiny circle and he laughed and looked at the crowd, who laughed with him. "Listen," he said, laying a hairy hand on Claud's shoulder, "I know my dogs. I don't have to do any fiddling around to win *this* quid. He goes in bottom."

"Right," Claud said. "That's a bet." He walked away with Jackie and I joined him.

"Jesus, Gordon, that was a near one!"

"Shook me."

"But we're in now," Claud said. He had that breathless look on his face again and he was walking about quick and funny, like the ground was burning his feet.

People were still coming through the gate into the field and there were easily three hundred of them now. Not a very nice crowd. Sharp-nosed men and women with dirty faces and bad teeth and quick, shifty eyes. The dregs of the big town. Oozing out like sewage from a cracked pipe and trickling along the road through the gate and making a smelly little pond of sewage at the top end of the field. They were all there—some with dogs, some without. Dogs led about on pieces of string, miserable dogs with hanging heads, thin mangy dogs with sores on their quarters (from sleeping on board), sad old dogs with gray muzzles, doped dogs, dogs stuffed with porridge to stop them winning, dogs walking stiff-legged—one especially, a white one. "Claud, why is that white one walking so stiff-legged?"

"Which one?"

"That one over there."

"Ah yes. I see. Very probably because he's been hung."

"Hung?"

"Yes, hung. Suspended in a harness for twenty-four hours with his legs dangling."

"Good God, but why?"

"To make him run slow, of course. Some people don't hold with *dope* or stuffing or strapping up. So they hang 'em."

"I see."

"Either that," Claud said, "or they sandpaper them. Rub their paws with rough sandpaper and take the skin off so it hurts when they run."

"Yes, I see."

And then the fitter, brighter-looking dogs, the better-fed ones who get horse meat every day, not pig swill or rusk and cabbage water, their coats shinier, their tails moving, pulling at their leads, undoped, unstuffed, awaiting perhaps a more unpleasant fate, the muzzle strap

to be tightened an extra four notches. *But make sure he can breathe now, Jock. Don't choke him completely. Don't let's have him collapse in the middle of the race. Just so he wheezes a bit, see Go on tightening it up an extra notch at a time until you can hear him wheezing. You'll see his mouth open and he'll start breathing heavy Then it's just right. But not if his eyeballs is bulging. Watch out for that, will you? O.K.?*

O.K.

"Let's get away from the crowd, Gordon. It don't do Jackie no good getting excited by all these other dogs."

We walked up the slope to where the cars were parked, then back and forth in front of the line of cars, keeping the dog on the move. Inside some of the cars I could see men sitting with their dogs, and the men scowled at us through the windows as we went by.

"Watch out now, Gordon. We don't want any trouble."

"No, all right."

These were the best dogs of all, the secret ones kept in the cars and taken out quick just to be entered up (under some invented name) and put back again quick and held there till the last minute, then straight down to the traps and back again into the cars after the race so no nosy bastard gets too close a look. The trainer at the big stadium said so. *All right, he said You can have him, but for Christ-sake don't let anybody recognize him. There's thousands of people know this dog, so you've got to be careful, see And it'll cost you fifty pound.*

Very fast dogs these, but it doesn't much matter how fast they are, they probably get the needle anyway, just to make sure. One and a half cc's of ether, subcutaneous, done in the ear, injected very slow. That'll put ten lengths on any dog. Or sometimes it's caffeine, caffeine in oil, or camphor. That makes them go, too. The men in the big cars know all about that. And some of them know about whisky. But that's intravenous. Not so easy when it's intravenous. Might miss the vein. All you got to do is miss the vein and it don't work and where are you then? So it's ether, or it's caffeine, or it's camphor. *Don't give her too much of that stuff now, Jock. What does she weigh? Fifty-eight pounds. All right then, you know what the man told us Wait a minute now. I got it written down on a piece of paper. Here it is. Point one of a cc. per ten pounds body weight equals five lengths over three hundred yards. Wait a minute now while I work it out. Oh, Christ, you better guess it. Just guess it, Jock It'll be all right, you'll find. Shouldn't be any trouble anyway, because I picked the others in the race myself. Cost me a tenner to old Feavey A*



*bloody tenner I give him, and dear Mr. Feasey, I says, that's for your birthday and because I love you.*

*Thank you ever so much, Mr. Feasey says. Thank you, my good and trusted friend.*

And for stopping them, for the men in the big cars it's chlorbutal. That's a beauty, chlorbutal, because you can give it the night before, especially to someone else's dog. Or Pethidiné. Pethidine and Hyoscine mixed, whatever that may be.

'Lot of fine old English sporting gentry here,' Claud said.

"Certainly are."

"Watch your pockets, Gordon. You got that money hidden away?"

We walked around the back of the line of cars—between the cars and the hedge—and then I saw Jackie stiffen and begin to pull forward on the leash, advancing with a stiff crouching tread. About thirty yards away, there were two men. One was holding a large fawn greyhound, the dog stiff and tense like Jackie. The other was holding a sack in his hands.

"Watch," Claud whispered, "they're giving him a kill."

Out of the sack onto the grass tumbled a small white rabbit—fluffy white, young, tame. It righted itself and sat still, crouching in the hunched-up way rabbits crouch, its nose close to the ground. A frightened rabbit. Out of the sack so suddenly onto the grass with such a bump. Into the bright light. The dog was going mad with excitement now, jumping up against the leash, pawing the ground, throwing himself forward, whining. The rabbit saw the dog. It drew in its head and stayed still, paralyzed with fear. The man transferred his hold to the dog's collar, and the dog twisted and jumped and tried to get free. The other man pushed the rabbit with his foot, but it was too terrified to move. He pushed it again, flicking it forward with his toe like a football, and the rabbit rolled over several times, righted itself and began to hop over the grass away from the dog. The other man released the dog which pounced with one huge pounce upon the rabbit, and then came the squeals, not very loud but shrill and anguished and lasting rather a long time.

"There you are," Claud said. "That's a kill."

"Not sure I liked it very much."

"I told you before, Gordon. Most of 'em does it. Kcens the dog up before a race."

"I still don't like it."

"Nor me. But they all do it. Even in the big stadiums, the trainers do it. Proper barbarity I call it."

We strolled away, and below us on the slope of the hill the crowd

was thickening and the bookies' stands with the names written on them in red and gold and blue were all erected now in a long line back of the crowd, each bookie already stationed on an upturned box beside his stand, a pack of numbered cards in one hand, a piece of chalk in the other, his clerk behind him with book and pencil. Then we saw Mr. Feasey walking over to a blackboard that was nailed to a post stuck in the ground.

"He's chalking up the first race," Claud said. "Come on, quick!"

We walked rapidly down the hill and joined the crowd. Mr. Feasey was writing the runners on the blackboard, copying names from his soft-covered notebook, and a little hush of suspense fell upon the crowd as they watched.

1. SALLY
2. THREE QUID
3. SNAILBOX LADY
4. BLACK PANTHER
5. WHISKY
6. ROCKIT

"He's in it!" Claud whispered. "First race! Trap four! Now listen, Gordon! Give me a fiver quick to show the winder."

Claud could hardly speak from excitement. That patch of whiteness had returned around his nose and eyes, and when I handed him a five-pound note, his whole arm was shaking as he took it. The man who was going to wind the bicycle pedals was still standing on top of the wooden platform in his blue jersey, smoking. Claud went over and stood below him, looking up.

"See this fiver," he said, talking softly, holding it folded small in the palm of his hand.

The man glanced at it without moving his head.

"Just so long as you wind her true this race, see. No stopping and no slowing down, and run her fast. Right?"

The man didn't move but there was a slight, almost imperceptible lifting of the eyebrows. Claud turned away.

"Now look, Gordon. Get the money on gradual, all in little bits like I told you. Just keep going down the line putting on little bits so you don't kill the price, see. And I'll be walking Jackie down very slow, as slow as I dare, to give you plenty of time. Right?"

"Right."

"And don't forget to be standing ready to catch him at the end of the race. Get him clear away from all them others when they start

fighting for the hare. Grab a hold of him tight and don't let go till I come running up with the collar and lead. That Whisky's a gypsy dog and he'll tear the leg off anything as gets in his way."

"Right," I said. "Here we go."

I saw Claud lead Jackie over to the finishing post and collect a yellow jacket with '4' written on it large. Also a muzzle. The other five runners were there too, the owners fussing around them, putting on their numbered jackets, adjusting their muzzles. Mr Feasey was officiating, hopping about in his tight riding breeches like an anxious perky bird, and once I saw him say something to Claud and laugh. Claud ignored him. Soon they would all start to lead the dogs down the track, the long walk down the hill and across to the far corner of the field to the starting traps. It would take them ten minutes to walk it. I've got at least ten minutes, I told myself, and then I began to push my way through the crowd standing six or seven deep in front of the line of bookies.

"Even money Whisky! Even money Whisky! Five to two Sally! Even money Whisky! Four to one Snailbox! Come on now! Hurry up, hurry up! Which is it?"

On every board all down the line, the Black Panther was chalked up at twenty five to one. I edged forward to the nearest book.

"Three pounds Black Panther," I said, holding out the money.

The man on the box had an inflamed magenta face and traces of some white substance around the corners of his mouth. He snatched the money and dropped it in his satchel. "Seventy-five pounds to three Black Panther," he said. "Number forty-two." He handed me a ticket and his clerk recorded the bet.

I stepped back and wrote rapidly on the back of the ticket "75 to 3," then slipped it into the inside pocket of my jacket, with the money.

So long as I continued to spread the money out thin like this, it ought to be all right. And anyway, on Claud's instructions, I'd made a point of betting a few pounds on the ringer every time he'd run so as not to arouse any suspicion when the real day arrived. Therefore, with some confidence, I went all the way down the line staking three pounds with each book. I didn't hurry, but I didn't waste any time either, and after each bet I wrote the amount on the back of the ticket before slipping it into my pocket. There were seventeen bookies. I had seventeen tickets and had laid out fifty-one pounds without disturbing the price one point. Forty-nine pounds left to get on. I glanced quickly down the hill. One owner and his dog had already reached the traps. The others were only twenty or thirty yards away. Except for Claud. Claud and Jackie were only halfway there.

I could see Claud in his old khaki greatcoat sauntering slowly along with Jackie pulling ahead keenly on the leash, and once I saw him stop completely and bend down, pretending to pick something up. When he went on again, he seemed to have developed a limp so as to go slower still. I hurried back to the other end of the line to start again.

"Three pounds Black Panther."

The bookmaker, the one with the magenta face and the white substance around the mouth, glanced up sharply, remembering the last time, and in one swift almost graceful movement of the arm he licked his fingers and wiped the figure twenty-five neatly off the board. His wet fingers left a small dark patch opposite Black Panther's name.

"All right, you got one more seventy-five to three," he said. "But that's the lot." Then he raised his voice and shouted, "Fifteen to one Black Panther! Fifteens the Panther!"

All down the line the twenty-fives were wiped out and it was fifteen to one the Panther now. I took it quick, but by the time I was through, the bookies had had enough and they weren't quoting him any more. They'd only taken six pounds each, but they stood to lose a hundred and fifty, and for them—small-time bookies at a little country flapping track—that was quite enough for one race, thank you very much. I felt pleased the way I'd managed it. Lots of tickets now. We stood to win something over two thousand pounds. Claud had said he'd win it thirty lengths. Where was Claud now?

Far away down the hill, I could see the khaki greatcoat standing by the traps and the big black dog alongside. All the other dogs were already in and the owners were beginning to walk away. Claud was bending down now, coaxing Jackie into No. 4, and then he was closing the door and turning away and beginning to run up the hill toward the crowd, the greatcoat flapping around him. He kept looking back over his shoulder as he ran.

Beside the traps, the starter stood, and his hand was up waving a handkerchief. At the other end of the track, beyond the winning post, quite close to where I stood, the man in the blue jersey was straddling the upturned bicycle on top of the wooden platform, and he saw the signal and waved back and began to turn the pedals with his hands. Then a tiny white dot in the distance—the artificial hare that was in reality a football with a piece of white rabbitskin tacked onto it—began to move away from the traps, accelerating fast. The traps went up and the dogs flew out. They flew out in a single dark lump, all together, as though it were one wide dog instead of six, and almost at once I saw Jackie drawing away from the field. I knew it was Jackie because of

the color There weren't any other black dogs in the race It was Jackie all right Don't move, I told myself Don't move a muscle or an eyelid or a toe or a fingertip Stand quite still and don't move. Watch him going Come on Jackson, boy! No, don't shout It's unlucky to shout And don't move Be all over in twenty seconds Round the sharp bend now and coming up the hill and he must be fifteen or twenty lengths clear Easy twenty lengths Don't count the lengths, it's unlucky And don't move Don't move your head Watch him out of your eye corners Watch that Jackson go! He's really laying down to it now up that hill He's won it now! He can't lose it now

When I got over to him, he was fighting the rabbit-skin and trying to pick it up in his mouth, but his muzzle wouldn't allow it, and the other dogs were pounding up behind him and suddenly they were all on top of him grabbing for the rabbit, and I got hold of him round the neck and dragged him clear like Claud had said and knelt down on the grass and held him tight with both arms round his body The other catchers were having a time all trying to grab their own dogs

Then Claud was beside me blowing heavily, unable to speak from blowing and excitement, removing Jackie's muzzle putting on the collar and lead and Mr Feasey was there too, standing with hands on hips, the butt in mouth pursed up tight like a mushroom, the two little caners staring at Jackie all over again

'So that's the game is it' he said

Claud was bending over the dog and acting like he hadn't heard

'I don't want you here no more after this, you understand that?'

Claud went on fiddling with Jackie's collar

I heard someone behind us saying 'That flat-faced bastard with the frown swung it properly on old Feasey this time' Someone else laughed Mr Feasey walked away Claud straightened up and went over with Jackie to the hare driver in the blue jersey who had dismounted from his platform

Cigarette, Claud said offering the pack

The man took one also the five pound note that was folded up small in Claud's fingers

"Thanks," Claud said "Thanks very much"

"Don't mention it," the man said

Then Claud turned to me "You put it all on Gordon?" He was jumping up and down and rubbing his hands and patting Jackie, and his lips trembled as he spoke

"Yes Half at twenty lives half at fifteens"

"Oh, Christ, Gordon, that's marvellous Wait here till I get the suitcase"

"You take Jackie," I said, "and go and sit in the car. I'll see you later."

There was nobody around the bookies now. I was the only one with anything to collect, and I walked slowly, with a sort of dancing stride and a wonderful bursting feeling in my chest, toward the first one in the line, the man with the magenta face and the white substance on his mouth. I stood in front of him and I took all the time I wanted going through my pack of tickets to find the two that were his. The name was Syd Pratchett. It was written up large across his board in gold letters on a scarlet field—"SYD PRATCHETT. THE BEST ODDS IN THE MIDLANDS. PROMPT SETTLEMENT."

I handed him the first ticket, and said, "Seventy-eight pounds to come." It sounded so good I said it again, making a delicious little chant of it. "Seventy-eight pounds to come on this one." I didn't mean to gloat over Mr. Pratchett. As a matter of fact I was beginning to like him quite a lot. I even felt sorry for him having to fork out so much money. I hoped his wife and kids wouldn't suffer.

"Number forty-two," Mr. Pratchett said, turning to his clerk, who held the big book. "Forty-two wants seventy-eight pounds."

There was a pause while the clerk ran his finger down the column of recorded bets. He did this twice, then he looked up at the boss and began to shake his head.

"No," he said. "Don't pay 'That ticket backed Snailbox Lady'."

Mr. Pratchett, standing on his box, leaned over and peered down at the book. He seemed to be disturbed by what the clerk had said, and there was a look of genuine concern on the huge magenta face.

That clerk is a fool, I thought, and any moment now Mr. Pratchett is going to tell him so.

But when Mr. Pratchett turned back to me, the eyes had become narrow and hostile. "Now look, Charley," he said softly. "Don't let's have any of that. You know very well you bet Snailbox. What's the idea?"

"I bet Black Panther," I said. "Two separate bets of three pounds each at twenty-five to one. Here's the second ticket."

This time he didn't even bother to check it with the book. "You bet Snailbox, Charley," he said. "I remember you coming round." With that, he turned away from me and started wiping the name of the last-race runners off his board with a wet rag. Behind him the clerk had closed the book and was lighting himself a cigarette. I stood watching them, and I could feel the sweat beginning to break through the skin all over my body.

"Let me see the book"

Mr Pratchett blew his nose into the wet rag and dropped it to the ground "Look," he said, 'why don't you go away and stop annoying me'

The point was this: a bookmaker's ticket, unlike a pari-mutuel ticket, never has anything written on it regarding the nature of your bet. This is normal practice: the same at every race track in the country, whether it's the Silver Ring at Newmarket, the Royal Enclosure at Ascot, or a tiny country flipping track near Oxford. All you receive is a card bearing the bookie's name and a serial number. The wager is (or should be) recorded by the bookie's clerk in his book, alongside the number of the ticket, but apart from that there is no evidence at all of how you betted.

Go on. Mr Pratchett was saying "Hop it."

I stepped back a pace and glanced down the long line of bookmakers. None of them was looking my way. Each was standing motionless, on his little wooden box beside his wooden placard, staring straight ahead into the crowd. I went up to the next one and presented a ticket.

I had the leopard, or Black Panther, at twenty-five to one. "I said firmly: 'Seventy-eight pounds to come!'"

This man, who had a soft inflamed face, went through exactly the same routine as Mr Pratchett, questioning his clerk, peering at the book, and giving me the same answers.

"Whatever the matter with you?" he said quietly, speaking to me as though I were eight years old. "Trying such a silly thing as that?"

This time I stepped well back. "You dirty thieving bastards!" I cried. "The whole lot of you!"

Automatically, as though they were puppets, all the heads down the line flicked round and looked at me. The expressions didn't alter. It was just the heads that moved, all seventeen of them, and seventeen pairs of cold, glassy eyes looked down at me. There was not the faintest flicker of interest in any of them.

"Somebody spoke, they seemed to be saying 'We didn't hear it. It's quite a nice day today.'"

The crowd, sensing excitement, was beginning to move in around me. I ran back to Mr Pratchett, right up close to him, and poked him in the stomach with my finger. "You're a thief! A lousy rotten little thief!" I shouted.

The extraordinary thing was that Mr Pratchett didn't seem to resent this at all.

"Well I never," he said. "*Look who's talking!*"

Then suddenly the big face broke into a wide, froolike grin, and he looked over at the crowd and shouted, "*Look who's talking!*"

All at once everybody started to laugh. Down the line, the bookies were coming to life and turning to each other and laughing and pointing at me and shouting "*Look who's talking! Look who's talking!*" The crowd began to take up the cry as well, and I stood there on the grass alongside Mr. Pratchett with this wad of notes as thick as a pack of cards in my hand, listening to them and feeling slightly hysterical. Over the heads of the people I could see Mr. Feasey beside his blackboard already chalking up the runners for the next race; and then beyond him, far away up the top of the field, I caught sight of Claud standing by the van, waiting for me with the suitcase in his hand.

It was time to go home



# THE MAN FROM CAP D'AMOUR

by THOMAS H. RADDALL

*Hockey is one of those sports which apparently lend themselves better to conversation than to writing. There is in any event a dearth of good hockey stories, and even that fine Canadian novelist Hugh McLennan who has written the definitive essay on the game has never written hockey fiction. After a long investigation we came across The Man from Cap D'Amour, a fresh and unpretentious story whose wonderful avoidance of cliché raised it we thought well above the other candidates we were considering. It is set in Canada naturally in one of those provincial reaches where life looks down to its real essentials: one's work, the other sex, and hockey.*

CARIBOU," said Maling, who was fond of epigrams, "is where good wireless operators go when they die—and bad ones while they live.

Dolly Hershman tied the lace of her skating boot firmly and sat back in the chair under the switchboard thrusting out her long legs with the confidence of a woman who knows they will bear inspection. "That sounds like a libel," she said, running an approving eye over the high-laced boots and the stockings that vanished smoothly under her short pleated skirt.

"And a bit sacrilegious," added MacOdrum with a smug look.

"I don't like it either," Mrs Maling said vigorously. "Explain yourself."

"Speakin' professionally, sweetheart, professionally Caribou is a wireless operator's paradise, therefore I assume the good ones come here when they dot-an'-dash their last 'SK' upon this mortal coil. The bad ones, like the poor, we have with us always. Consider a moment. When a benign Government seized on Mr. Marconi's astonishing invention back in 1904 the apparatus was crude an' the range was short. So they set up a flock of little stations about the shores of the Gulf an' upon the islands thereof as a brand-new aid to navigation. Government is sensitive about navigation in the Gulf. The St. Lawrence is the mouth of Canada, highly important to the digestive organs between Montreal an' Fort William."

"What does that make Vancouver?" demanded Blackburn, who was a West Coast man and sensitive about it.

"He sounds like a traveling medicine show," Mrs Maling said tartly.

"Now, since the Gulf is icebound four or five months a year there's no point in keepin' all those wireless stations goin' in winter. Hence the hegra, a lot of high-spirited young Crusoes descendin' upon the peace of Montreal an' Halifax every fall. What to do with 'em? That was a problem. Some could be laid off, true enough. But the wireless operator is a peculiar animal with rovin' instincts, an' bindin' him again in spring—all of him—would have buffaloeed Sherlock Holmes an' a whole army of Watsons. So they parked 'em for the winter at various all-year-round stations where they could make 'emself useful an' keep in practice. Now down at this end of the Gulf there was a large fishin' population on the Millstones, cut off by ice all winter. Benign Government decided to keep the Millstones' wireless station goin' the year around, which meant also a station on the mainland within range. Mark the finger of Destiny writin' Caribou on the map."

"Ancient history," yawned young Blackburn at the phone. He gave the crystal detector an expert rap, listened a moment and scribbled an entry on the long yellow process-verbal sheet.

"I'm sick of history," murmured Dolly Hershman, for she was a teacher at the Academy. "But don't consider my feelings."

"Now, Caribou had another geographical advantage. An easy rail journey to Halifax or Saint John——"

"Canada's great winter ports," boomed MacOdrum, striking a po-

litical pose, "ice-free the year around, through which the mighty commerce of this rising nation——"

'Where there is an intermittent demand for ship wireless operators. See the beauty of it' They could park some of the seasonal men at Caribou, sendin' 'em off to join ships whenever the need arose, or to coast stations in Nova Scotia for reliefs."

The door opened and more skaters came in from the ice under the aerial mast bringing a blast of cold air. They tramped noisily on their skates toward the stove, tearing off gloves and warming their hands. Joram and Parrish were wireless operators. Ruth Boland was the daughter of a Caribou merchant, Isobel M'Rae another teacher from the Academy, and there was a red-checked blonde girl known for some obscure reason as Jimmie. They said "Birrrr" and 'Gosh, my feet are cold' and then, noticing Maling's pipe still waving in mid-air, paused politely.

'What's this?' demanded Jimmie. 'A game?'

A girl, Blackburn said. The boss is playing charades.'

'And the answer?' Mrs. Maling said. 'Is a lemon. Go on, darling.'

Her husband bit the pipe in his teeth with a snap. The answer is a lot of brush under plinked youngsters driftin' through Caribou every winter. In Satan findin' mischief still for idle hands to do. They can make do's and d's. They can make a fist at repairs. They can read magazines half the night watch—looking at Joram "an' doze the rest—this to Parrish—'an' turn in a log sheet in the mornin' as plausible as gospel. But they haven't the responsibility of a Labrador pup. That's who's sayin' all the bad operators come to Caribou. Sometimes I think I'm runnin' a kindergarten. It was different in the old days. Now when I was at Cape Torment in 1908——"

'There were girls in those days,' murmured Mrs. Maling.

"But see how you've improved your position," urged Isobel M'Rae. 'Here you are, temporary Saint Peter of a temporary heaven for wireless operators. That makes you enormously important to the lovelorn gals of Caribou.'

Dolly Hershman threw a red wool mitten at her. "Bella, please! Have you no shame? And while we're on the subject, Saint Peter, I'd like to point out that Paradise is going to the dogs. There hasn't been a new operator for two weeks."

"Only night before last," Art Joram said pensively, "at the Hockey Club Dance, she looked in my eyes an' said she'd love me forever."

"The ravenous women of Caribou," observed Parrish—a cynic of twenty-one, "are a tradition up the Gulf."

Maling tapped the pipe on his boot. "I do my best, girls, but I have to take things as they come. As a matter of fact there's a new operator on his way from Cap D'Amour—but you won't like him at all. He's a son of Hamish MacNeill, the operator in charge up there."

"Cap D'Amour," repeated Jimsie. "Sounds very nice."

"And very misleading," Mrs. Maling said. "The early French explorers had a lot of fun naming points along the coast. Just a succession of black crags and barren hills, and the worse they look the better the name. Belle Isle, Point Riche, Bonne Bay, Cap D'Amour—just a lot of Norman jokes that sound very flat after two or three centuries. But these MacNeills, darling, isn't there something I've heard—MacNeill, MacNeill—Cap D'Amour—"

"They're a legend," Maling said. "Hamish MacNeill went up there when they built the station in 1901 and he's been there ever since raising a family of redheaded boys. It's a wild inaccessible place and the only human life they see is the light-house staff and once a year the crew of a supply steamer. There used to be two other operators—MacNeill taught his boys the business, and Cap D'Amour's been a family affair since the war broke out. This is the oldest boy, some where about nineteen. I think, a great redheaded gawk. I fancy will rock moss in his hair and bake apples growing out of his ears."

Isobel MacRae wrinkled her nose. "Probably think a foxglove is something to do with fur-trapping." Jimsie stood up on her knees, tucked her lower lip inside her mouth, and gave a one minute sketch of a gawk from Cap D'Amour.

"You mean to say he's never seen a woman?" Dolly Hershman said incredulously.

"His mother, that's all," Maling said. "He was about four when the MacNeills went up there. Been holdin' down a watch at Cap D'Amour since operators got scarce in the early days of the war. It's an all-year-round station—he even knows why."

"This," MacOdrum mused, "is going to be fun."

"Fun?" agreed the girls.

Hennessy, MacOdrum, Ishway, and Blackburn met the newcomer at the railway station. They had to wait until midnight for the Caribou hockey team had gone to play at Starborough accompanied by a

large crowd of supporters, and the return journey always delayed the train. It came rocking into the station at last and stopped in a cloud of steam and a great whistling of air brakes. The Caribou players jumped to the platform in a swarm of yelling citizens and moved off with song. The wireless committee of welcome, huddled in the lee of a freight shed, saw nothing of a redheaded gawk from Cap D'Amour. The jubilation of Caribou died away toward Main Street, and a frosty silence hung over the train. They went aboard to investigate and found a young man sitting calmly by the stove in an empty second-class carriage. He was well over six feet tall, with a girlish complexion and a swollen eye rapidly turning black.

"You the fella from Cap D'Amour?" Ishway said.

The tall young man stood up. "I am," he said precisely. "Who are you?"

"We," MacOdrum said, "are the fellas from Caribou. Why didn't you get off the train?" He called off names, and they shook hands all round.

"I wanted to be sure," said the man from Cap D'Amour. "They said Caribou was at the end of the line, so I waited a while."

"Where'd you get the shiner?" demanded Hennessy.

The tall young man put up a hand and prodded his eye in a gingerly way. "There were a lot of people having a noisy time in the other carriage. There seemed to be a celebration. Some of them had been drinking. I think. Some of them got to fighting. They broke two of the train windows. One fellow asked me where I was going, and I told him the wireless station at Caribou, and he hit me in the eye."

"What did you do?" blurted Hennessy. He was Irish and blood-thirsty.

"I got up and went into the second-class carriage. It was quiet in here. There was a squaw smoking a pipe and spitting at the stove."

The delegation regarded each other in silence. "Let me get this straight," MacOdrum said patiently. "You said you were going to the wireless station and this guy hit you in the eye. Then—correct me if I'm missin' anything—you got up and went into the second-class carriage. Right?"

"Right," said young MacNeill. "I've been told about that kind of thing. No gentleman lets himself get mixed up in a brawl."

"Who told you that?" gasped Hennessy.

"My mother."

"You're a credit to her," MacOdrum said heavily. "Where's your baggage?"

Next morning Maling sat the newcomer in the operator's chair and explained the apparatus in simple words and at great length. He had received the report of the welcome committee and feared the worst. At last he said, "Have I made it clear?"

"Yes, sir."

Maling coughed. He could not remember being addressed as "Sir" in fifteen hard-bitten years. "Any questions you'd like to ask?" he said kindly.

MacNeill slid a phone off his left ear. "Well, nothing much, sir. It's queer old stuff, isn't it? I thought these ten inch coil sets were used only for emergency apparatus aboard ship. I guess they're not much good for anything else. On a coast station? Fancy that!"

"It was good stuff in 1904 when this station was built," Maling said defensively. "Caribou's been passed by the march of time. Matter of fact, the station's usefulness is over. I don't think they'll open it in other year. Millstone's got a new three-kilowatt transmitter an' he can make himself heard all over the Gulf."

"Yes," murmured the man from Cap D'Amour in his precise way. "We've talked to them from Cap D'Amour. I guess the time is coming when most of the Gulf stations will be closed down or turned into direction-finders. They're putting out receivers now with vacuum tube detectors and amplifiers, and you can sit and listen to the whole world. No need for these little short-range stations any more. Your battery-charging outfit—that's interesting. Rectifying the town's account with a vacuum tube. A lot better than running a big gasoline engine and dynamo like we had to do at Cap D'Amour."

"Where'd you learn about vacuum tubes an' direction finders?" Maling said curiously, for this was in 1919, when such things were still new.

MacNeill sturred in the chair. "Books," he said diffidently. "Father sent for all the latest technical books and magazines. We had little classes four times a week. That was in addition to Mom's School classes. I stopped in Halifax for a while after I got off the boat, and took my examinations for a first-class certificate. At the wireless office in the Navy Yard. The examining officer said he had to send the pa-

pers to Ottawa, but in the meantime I could consider myself passed by acclamation. What did he mean?"

"A new technical term, I fancy," Maling said hurriedly. "Find the exams hard?"

"No. I was surprised. It was just a lot of old stuff. He examined me on a 1½ k. W. standard ship set—the old British type, with converter and fixed spark gap."

"Had you ever seen one before?"

No, but I learned about it in Hawkhead and Dowsett's book. I took it all apart and put it together again. I wanted to dismantle the converter and show how to wind a new armature, but the officer said: "Good God, no," and passed on to the Postmaster-General's Regulation. He sat up alertly in the chair and settled the phones firmly over his ears. Millstone's calling: sir. A king QRU."

Tell him Yes. Maling took a clip from the wall. Here's a couple of my letters.

McNeill threw the transmitting switches expertly, and the old-fashioned spark leaped and crackled like a machine gun. The messages were fine. There was a cheap rate between Caribou and the Metropole for the benefit of people from the islands who wintered in the mainland. He finished and threw the send-receive switches. Across the cut room Maling could hear the whine of Millstone's transmitter in the phone. "Send slower!" uttered the man from Cap D'Amour. He repeated the messages laboriously. As the crash of the bugle cut in, subsided there was a hush, painful by the contrast. Maling heard the curt "R SK" from Millstone. McNeill took his pencil and marked the time of transmission on the messages made in entry on his log sheet and sat back in the chair, slipping the phone from his left ear. "Funny," he said. "The air is clear as a bell, but they couldn't get me the first time and asked me to send slower."

Later Maling said: "I timed some of that first transmission by the clock. You were pounding brass at somethin' like thirty words a minute. Those day letters were in French full of family names and bits of *patois*. The primitive spark makes a sound in the other fellow's phones like somebody tearing a shirt. Have a heart. Just because you've pounded a brass key since you were old enough to learn the alphabet, you mustn't think you've got to show off your speed. Some day an old hand will get you on the receivin' end and roast your ears off."

The man from Cap D'Amour sat up stiffly. "I wasn't showing off, sir. That's my normal speed. I made errors in that repeat because I'm not used to sending slow."

Maling gave him a hard look. The black eye made a caricature of the recruit's right profile, but from the left his face was handsome. The long sweep of his jaw was just saved from ruthlessness by a deep cleft in the chin, but he had the fresh complexion of a girl. His visible eye was large and a very dark brown, a soulful eye. His mouth was wide, the upper lip molded in fine curves such as women achieve by pencil marks, and his teeth were square and white. It came to Maling as a revelation that the man from Cap D'Amour was the answer to almost any maiden's prayer, and because he did not look for beauty in his operators and indeed disliked extreme good looks in any man, the next thought popped into his mind with a fitness little short of diabolical.

"Do you skate, MacNeill?"

"Yes, sir. Very well."

"Play hockey?"

"Hockey? We never had enough for a team at Cap D'Amour. We used to fool around with sticks and a puck, though, my brothers and the lighthouse men. I guess you'd call it pretty crude. But D'Amour taught us the fine points. You've got enough for a team here, haven't you?"

Maling nodded. "We've got a schedule with the town team, too. Caribou at present is a sort of clearinghouse for spare operators, so our team changes rapidly, but we've managed to keep our end up. There's quite a rivalry. The Caribou girls seem to like wireless operators, which adds to the fun."

MacNeill frowned. "What's that got to do with it?"

Maling gave him another hard look, but the recruit's face was innocent. "Let it go. The point is, we've got a game on next week, and Ishway's a bit lame. Get a hard body checked into the board on our last game. What position'd you play?"

"Oh, anything. I'm not a bad goal tender. I can play a pretty fair game on defense, too. But if I had my choice, I guess I'd rather play right wing."

"Good!" Maling's voice was grim. "The boys are going down to the rink this afternoon for practice, so you'd better plan to go along. Got skates?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"



When Maling repeated this conversation to his wife she bristled at once "Pete! don't you dare let that boy play against Town They'll kill him You ought to be ashamed of yourself"

Maling set his jaw defiantly "He's too cocky, darlin' About everything Needs takin' down a peg or two. They'll knock some of the stuffin' out of him Good for him"

Hennessy's reaction was like Mrs Maling's "Say! That pretty boy won't last a minute It'll be murder Listen! Somebody smacked him on the train an'——"

"I know I know Nevertheless, Mick, he plays next week He's six-foot one an' healthy, an' it's time he learned there isn't any Santa Claus He wants to play right wing"

Hennessy shrugged Well it's his funeral not mine But he won't play long Pete The Town bunch are mostly just outa the army, an' they play like they were still nussin' Fritz along the road to Mons Bayonet drill has given 'em some fancy new ideas about a hockey stick Besides the crowd likes rough stuff"

Maling went down to the rink in the afternoon and watched Hennessy put the team through their paces A number of Caribou idlers joined him at the boards The man from Cap D'Amour played very well He moved like the wind, using a good choppy stride his stick-handling was good his pass shots were well timed, and his goal shots hard and accurate Hennessy, at the goal found himself sprawling, diving, and exerting all his tricks to keep the puck out of the net When they paused for a spell Hennessy skated over to the boards, his short legs mulched in goal tender's pads He was grinning "What d'ye think of him Pete?"

"Not bad But anybody can do that stuff with no opposition What's your idea?"

Hennessy rested his arms on the boards and wrinkled his snub nose "You said it He plays like a perfect gentleman, if you get what I mean One hoist from those gorillas on the Town defense an' he'll be listenin' to the birdies We got to pray for Ishway's ankle He's our only spare unless some more ops drift in"

In the bungalow on the hill Mrs Maling admitted a breathless troop of girls They draped themselves over the furniture, flinging skating boots on the floor, and burst into voice

"One at a time," Mrs Maling said crisply "What do you think of the gawk from Cap D'Amour?"

Jimsie had the grace to blush. "There's only one word He's divine."

"Did you ever see a boy so good-looking?" demanded Dolly Hershman

"And," moaned Bella M'Rae, "he's never been anywhere and doesn't know anything, the darling! Where's he been all my life? When I look at him I feel funny all over"

"He's really handsome," said Ruth Boland, the sedate one "And he has the quaintest old-fashioned manners We—happened—to be skating in the rink when the boys came down for practice, so we paired off for a few turns around the ice Dolly the hussy got to him first"

Dolly rolled her large blue eyes "My dear you've no idea At first he wouldn't touch me And when I pointed out Bella and Ari Joram, and Ruth waltzing with Bob MacOdium he drew in a deep breath like a swimmer heading into cold water and put his arm around my waist as if it were a roll of barbed wire Darling, I could have screamed! When I slid my arm around his waist he shuddered like a fly bitten horse He went three times around the rink with me, wearing a we-would-re-about-to-die expression and then dropped me like a hot brick when Hennessy came on wearing his goal pads It was too delicious And that black eye!"

Jimsie's mouth was set firmly "We might as well have everything open and aboveboard I want to say here and now that I saw Jim first"

"Nonsense! Dolly Hershman said "My arm was around his waist when you others were gasping for breath That gives me a first mortgage"

"Pooh!" poohed Isobel M'Rae "Anyone could see you scared him out of his wits The poorest technique I ever saw And his hat goes so nicely with my new sweater"

"I think," Ruth Boland said in her slow warm voice "you'd better leave him to me You're all in too much of a rush You frighten him If he's got to learn about women he might as well learn quietly I'm a perfectly nice girl and I'm sure his mother would approve of me I think I'll teach him to dance, first"

"That," Mrs Maling observed with approval, "is a perfectly nice way for a perfectly nice girl to get a perfectly nice man's arms around her. First, though, you'd better learn to sing 'The Flowers of

the Forest,' all of you. Pete's putting him in as right wing against Town next Friday night. He'll make a beautiful corpse."

The babel of protest still echoed plaintively in the little parlor when Maling walked in to face the wifely music.

The week passed pleasantly enough. There was strenuous daily practice in the Town rink. There was a sleigh drive, a moonlight snowshoe hike, and a tobogganing party, each of which ended in the warmth and glow of a Caribou home with noise and refreshments. In all of them the man from Cap D'Amour was a cynosure. He had smitten feminine Caribou like a new and feverish disease. Flappers paused and stared after him, goggle-eyed, on the street. Old ladies backed him into parlor chairs and asked kindly after that perfect stranger, his mother, and remembered gustily the days of their youth. The more eligible females buzzed about him like flies. When they found he could not dance and would not try, they sat out with him in relays on the stairs. He had no stock of small talk and understood very little of theirs, but they found him keen on his work and drew him on that, listening with rapt faces while his eager baritone explained inductance, rheostats, condensers, electromotive force, and the theory of the Heaviside layer. When he appeared in church on Sunday morning he was conducted to a front pew, and the young ladies of the choir, facing him from high stalls under the palisade of organ pipes, rolled soulful eyes to the roof and chanted the anthem at him like a personal hymn of praise; and after the service the minister's wife invited him to teach a class at Sunday School, which, with great embarrassment, he declined.

The young men of the town regarded him with puzzled hate. They knew the episode of the train in all its shameful detail, and they had various appropriate names for a young man who would not smoke, drink, or fight, who referred openly to his mother as "Mom," and was rumored to be in the habit of saying his prayers every night. But somehow these terms did not fit a man who stood six feet in his socks, turned flying somersaults on snowshoes, and skated like a bullet. He should have lisped in a treble key, but his voice had a hard ring like a steel rail under the section man's hammer. He should have had fluttering lids and downcast eyes in the presence of men and an assured dancing-master manner in the company of women; but he looked men straight in the eye like a child and was uneasy and diffident with girls. Maling, who had seen him pick up a 250-pound condenser with ease, informed an astonished barber's shop that the man from Cap

D'Amour was "strong as a bull moose." The young men went about with bewildered frowns, and told each other darkly that there would be an open hunting season in the rink on Friday night.

Maling went down to the rink on the fateful night full of guilt. Ish-way, his ankle bandaged under the long wool stockings, sat at the phones in the wireless station in full panoply—padded shorts, sweater, boots, and skates. It was agreed that Maling should run up in a car and take over the watch if his services were needed. Ordinarily the crowd for Wireless-versus-Town games was small, because wireless teams were always scratch crews, often dependent on town men for substitutes, and the scores were one-sided. Tonight the rink was packed. The long plank seats groaned under a mass of rugs and humanity, and the standing room behind was rapidly filling up. Tobacco smoke curled upward from the packed tiers and joined an increasing cloud under the rafters. There was something savage in the roar of conversation that filled the place.

"It's like a——" Mrs. Maling paused. She was going to say "bull-fight," but that seemed inadequate. "It's like one of those old Roman arenas, Pete."

Maling nodded grimly. "Yeah. An' here's the Early Christian"

The Wireless team came on the ice amid shouts, whistles, and applause. Their sweaters were shabby relics of obscure teams in which they had played. Hennessy's was blue, with "Glace Bay Wolves" in white letters; Joran's red-and-green said "Halifax Hurricanes"; Parrish wore a simple and ambiguous "Montreal"; and MacOdium, who had joined an infantry battalion in Canada before transferring to the field telegraphs, announced "Seventy-fifth." The sweaters of young Blackburn and MacNeill were unadorned. The overhead lights struck bright gleams of bronze from MacNeill's bare head. A male voice, pitched in a pseudo-feminine key, cried, "Oh, you kid with the red hair!" and everybody laughed. The Town team appeared in a tumult of approval. They wore white sweaters with broad red stripes and looked very large and confident:

"Who's the referee?" demanded Mrs. Maling.

Her husband stretched his short neck and did some bobbing and twisting. "Skid Lepreau and—ah-hah!—Bucky MacDonald."

Mrs. Maling pursed her lips and glared. "I thought so. It's deliberate. Lepreau wears a pair of mental blinkers and Bucky MacDonald simply loves a fight on the ice. The man's notorious."

"Aw now, sweetheart. He's just broad-minded, that's all."

She caught sight of Dolly Hershman, Bella M'Rae, Jimsie, and the Boland girl sitting opposite center ice, and stood up, waving. They saw her and fluttered their hands, pointing to the burly figure of Bucky MacDonald and rolling their eyes toward the rafters.

The teams faced off. Bucky MacDonald, barrel-chested and important in white sweater and cap, dropped the puck and skated aside. Play began with a clatter of sticks and a tangle of scrambling forwards. From this tangle the puck shot suddenly over the Wireless blue line, and Joram and MacOdrum moved promptly to meet it. There was another scramble as they met the Town forwards in hot pursuit, with Blackburn, Parrish, and MacNeill back-skating rapidly to join battle. The puck, lost for a moment in flying ice dust and a whirl of gleaming skates, appeared outside the melee, a lonely black dot. It was a tempting shot to the Wireless goal, where Hennessy waited tensely, trying to make himself as large as possible in the vulnerable side of his cage. The crowd yelled. Four players thrust at it, sticks clashing. The puck moved a few feet toward the boards and stopped again. This time five sticks scooped at it hungrily and it went clear, and young Blackburn pounced on it and fled up the ice, followed by the pack. MacNeill flew up along the right boards for a pass, but the Town defense men stopped Blackburn's rush, and their center player, hook-checking smartly, rapped the puck toward the left boards, where it bounced and disappeared in a flurry of wildly ducking spectators.

The teams settled down. The forward lines from time to time broke away toward the opposing goal, but seldom got past the defense for a hard shot. Joram and MacOdrum were playing a stout game on the Wireless defense. Blackburn at left wing and Parrish at center did very well against the heavier Town forwards. The man from Cap D'Amour was the doubtful quantity. At times his speed was brilliant, his stick-handling was good, and he could rush the puck without yielding to that amiable weakness of amateur forwards, the thrill of a lone attack. But his play generally was erratic. Maling put it down to lack of experience in team play. His wife, with feminine instinct, diagnosed it more accurately as plain stage fright. At the end of the first period the scoreboard was blank. The Town goalie had stopped eight shots, Hennessy twelve. As the players trooped off the ice, Maling relaxed.

"See, sweetheart? You got the boys all wrong. Good clean play

throughout, no trippin' an' very little body checkin'. Why, it's positively dull."

"Wait and see," his wife said ominously. She wriggled her chilled feet inside the heavy black overshoes and wished she had brought another rug.

The game went into the second period in the same gentlemanly scramble. This time the Town forwards carried the puck away, working a perfect three-man combination. MacNeill, back-skating like a demon, swung in toward the Town center and poke-checked shrewdly. Center feinted a left pass. The man from Cap D'Amour made a lightning sweep to block it. At the same moment he backed into Joram, and as they sprawled, MacNeill's stick went between the legs of the Town center. The man fell heavily, followed in quick succession by Blackburn, Parrish, and Town's right wing, who were skating in at speed. The crowd stood up with a single motion as the human heap untangled, and saw the Town center, a popular man named Muir, lying inert on the ice. He was carried off awkwardly by a trio of rink attendants and Caribou's one-man police force, and Bucky MacDonald waved MacNeill off the ice for a major penalty. At once the crowd broke into catcalls. The man from Cap D'Amour stood uncertainly for a moment and then followed the direction of MacDonald's jerking thumb toward the penalty box. He stood there like a prisoner at the bar, surrounded by a booing chorus, and his amazement gave place slowly to a deep blush that spread up to the roots of his tousled hair.

"Accident!" Maling objected. His voice was lost in the uproar. So was a shrill chorus of "No fair! No fair!" from utterly biased feminine voices all over the benches.

"It looked bad, just the same," Mrs. Maling said reluctantly.

Town substituted a gaunt rangy man at center, and play was resumed. The Wireless team, one man short, promptly found itself on the defensive. There was some body checking, in which Joram, and Bob MacOdrum joined readily, but nothing bad enough to warrant interference from the referees. Sticks were carried higher, though, and elbows were suddenly prominent. Maling noted these ominous signs and glanced at his wife. She was looking at her watch, timing MacNeill's penalty. The Wireless team fought a delaying action, but Town was not to be denied. Hennessy performed brilliant antics in his cage, stopped a barrage of shots, but twice there was a flurry in front of the

goal and a puck that appeared in the corner of the net as if by magic. The second was an absurd rolling shot, and Hennessy looked sheepish as the crowd cheered

When MacNeill resumed his place he was booed again vigorously. The team took up the attack again in good heart. Parrish caught a loose puck and got into his stride, with MacNeill racing up the right ice for a pass. Town's right wing, at Parrish's heels, hooked the puck nicely. MacNeill, coming in fast, met the heavy Town defense men. They caught him between them and swung their shoulders together in that bruising operation known as "the hoist." It was legitimate but deliberate. MacNeill picked himself up quickly, wiping ice dust from his face, and plunged back to join the play. Then a remarkably accidental skate caught his own in mid-career and he took a header, sliding along on his chest.

"They're roughing him," Mrs. Maling hissed. Maling watched a stick butt connect with MacNeill's ribs and thought of Hennessy on bayonet drill. Soon the man from Cap D'Amour was white from head to foot with ice dust. Town ran up another goal as the period closed, and Maling went down to comfort a grim team.

"The party's gettin' rough," Hennessy grinned.

"Givin' as good as we get, though," Joram said stoutly.

"They're pickin' on the kid," Hennessy said. "Maybe you better run up for Ishway. Talk the kid into callin' it a night."

Maling walked over to MacNeill and turned his back on the rest of the team.

"Listen, son. You've played a good game for your first appearance, but there's a time to quit, and this is it. I'll put Ishway on defense and send Joram up to right wing in your place." MacNeill said nothing for a moment. His left cheek was swelling and a thin trickle ran like a red pencil mark from a cut on his forehead.

He blurted, "Look here, sir. They're not playing hockey at all."

"Sure, sure," Maling soothed. "Now Ishway's used to this kind of play—and——"

"They're playing just the way Father told me not to play!"

Maling paused. "What d'you mean, son?"

"Well, up at Cap D'Amour Father'd get us all down on the pond back of the wireless station and show us the right way. Then some days, when Mom was busy at the house, he'd take us down and show us how not to play. It was kind of fun, for a change. We were all big strong boys and we could take it. So could Father."

Maling's eyes widened. "You mean high-stickin'?"

"And tripping."

"Body checkin'? Elbowin'?"

"Yes. And how to rush the puck and jump into the air straight at the defense man and make him drop aside to avoid your skates."

"Phew! Anything else?"

"Yes. He showed me how to swing a fist so as to get all the speed of my skating into it."

"What did your mother say?"

"Well, I don't think she liked it very much. The day I blacked Father's eye and young Ian got a sprained ankle, she said she guessed Father would never outgrow his Cape Breton upbringing."

"An' what did Father say to that?"

"He said it was more blessed to give than to receive sometimes, and an old Highland custom."

Maling put hands in overcoat pockets and rocked back and forth on heel and toes, meditatively. "Son, this is interestin'. Did Hamish MacNeill, by any chance, tell you 'When in Rome, play your hockey Roman style'?"

MacNeill regarded him with surprised brown eyes. "Rome? Why, I never knew they——"

"Let it go, son; let it go. I was thinkin' of arenas an' Early Christians, I guess. The point is, the local boys are moppin' up the ice with your gentlemanly person. The point is, I'm afraid you're goin' to get hurt."

"I can take it!" snapped the man from Cap D'Amour. There was a glow in the dark eyes.

"Sure! But I can't. Conscience doth make cowards of us all. I've got a conscience named Helena A. Maling, an' it's gonna hurt me plenty if the boys hurt you."

MacNeill's eyes were like molten bronze now. There were red glints. "You talk in riddles, sir. Do you mean I should play hockey the way Father taught me not to play just because these fellows got a little rough?"

"That's the general idea, son "

"Very well." The man from Cap D'Amour breathed deeply. "But you understand, sir, it isn't quite fair. I mean, these fellows never knew Father."

The bell rang. Maling choked and tottered back to his seat.

"Pete, you're still playing that boy!" said the Voice of Conscience.



"Sweetheart," he confessed, "curiosity got the best of me."

The final period opened smartly with the Town forwards breaking away in a smooth combination. Center, poke-checked furiously by Parrish and Blackburn, passed to Right Wing. MacOdrum and Joram moved up slowly to meet Right Wing, who passed to Left Wing, a quick clean shot across the ice. MacNeill, back-skating like a whirlwind, bumped Left Wing hard and hooked busily. Left Wing rapped the puck against the boards, eluded MacNeill with a passing elbow thrust for good measure, picked up the rubber again on the rebound, and headed for the Wireless goal through the wide-open defense. The crowd came to its feet roaring, while Hennessy performed the quaint bear dance of a goalie facing a terrific shot at close quarters. At this point the man from Cap D'Amour appeared to trip. He came down on one knee and then slid headlong, arms outthrust, and the tip of his stick pulled Left Wing's skate from under him. It was neatly timed and executed. Left Wing fell, thrusting out gloved hands to break the force of his descent. Hennessy cleared the puck easily, even nonchalantly, and a second later Left Wing slid into the cage on his chest. A wit in the stands shouted "Goal!" and there was a laugh from that quarter. There were shouts of "Penalty!" from seats near the boards, but the referees had noticed nothing.

There followed some jockeying near the Wireless blue line. Then Parrish broke away with the puck, received a stiff body check, and went down, scooping the rubber blindly toward right ice. MacNeill was at his post, traveling fast. He caught the puck neatly and rushed for the Town goal. The heavy Town defense appeared like Nemesis before him, skating slowly toward him. The stage was set for another "hoist," and a brutal one, for the man from Cap D'Amour was racing at top speed. Mrs. Maling closed her eyes. She did not see MacNeill leap high in air. She missed the startled looks of the defense men, their instinctive dives to avoid the oncoming skates, and the presence of mind with which they tried to hook the flyer's feet with their sticks. She did see MacNeill make a perfect landing, flipping the puck to the left, where young Blackburn promptly shot it home. The Town goalie had moved out to meet MacNeill, and a high shot to the corner caught him flat-footed. She was astonished to hear the crowd cheering, for her opinion of a Caribou hockey crowd was low. Maling was rubbing his hands.

Play resumed with a rising tempo. Hard body checks became a commonplace. Sticks were carried higher and so were tempers. Mac-

Neill was in the thick of it. Things happened wherever he went. In his astonishing metamorphosis the experts perceived a certain deadly science which gave more punishment than it took. And the crowd loved it. They had come to see an execution; they were seeing a one-man riot. Caribou liked its hockey rough.

The referees hesitated. Skid Lepreau saw things in spite of his mental blinkers. A quiet easygoing man, he had sensed the injustice of MacNeill's penalty in the second period, and he believed in the compensation of errors. Bucky MacDonald, an old hockey player who had never asked or given quarter in his own day, believed that frequent whistling made a dull game. These consonant beliefs ignored the fact that the man from Cap D'Amour was running amuck. The Town players, aroused, began to seek him out with vengeful purpose, and in this amiable distraction Parrish and the speedy Blackburn found profit, rushing the Town goal again and again. The goalie performed miracles. Presently, inevitably, a shot went home. The crowd cheered, and went on yelling as the Wireless forwards strove for another to even the score. MacNeill redoubled his efforts. Players went down in mutual disaster, arose, and scattered after the puck, met and fell again. In the tangled heaps of white-powdered men fists worked busily with short stiff jabs too quick and too vague for even-handed justice from the referees. Lepreau frowned and MacDonald glared, but they were helpless. Finally a heap disintegrated near the left boards with fists flying openly. Sticks were dropped. Ten men smote and slithered in a fierce ecstasy, while the two goalies looked upon the fight with longing eyes and stared at each other down the length of the rink. Bucky MacDonald sailed into the melee, whistle in teeth, blowing furiously. In the midst of it raged the man from Cap D'Amour. His bronze locks were wet with sweat and melted ice dust. His large eyes burned. His fists shot out with speed and accuracy. The referee thrust a purple face at him, whistled at him shrilly, and swiftly MacNeill's busy knuckles came up. There was no malice about it. He was striking out impartially at a shifting ring of hostile faces, and the new face suffered with the rest.

War is a contagious thing. The ice was suddenly populated by men pouring out of the stands, eager to smite somebody, anybody. Wary wives and sweethearts seized their companions and dragged them away from that seductive spectacle. The game broke up in mass disorder. Through the aggressive assembly waded Caribou's police force, a giant man in blue, leaving a sort of armed peace in his wake.

The word passed before him "John Angus! Here's John Angus!" He came to the center of the battle like an ambulatory Gibraltar. The warring players stumbled apart, grinning sheepishly.

"Boys," rumbled John Angus calmly, "I guess that'll be all for to-night."

In the bare little dressing room MacNeill put off his skate boots with a gesture of disgust. The room was full of people talking furiously and patting him on the back. He was silent and unappreciative, and once he wriggled his shoulders in a huddering almost feminine way, as if the touch of strange hands were distasteful. As he put on his overcoat he spoke "Out of my way, you! I've got to relieve Ishway."

"Here's with you, son," Maling said. They walked up the hill in silence, Mrs. Maling between them, and found a grim young man at the phones perspiring in hockey kit. Ishway ignored MacNeill's battered face. He thrust a message form at Maling and said—

"Read that!"

Mrs. Maling recognized the narrow, canary yellow service form, used for official business. "Bad news?" she blurted, eyes very wide.

"For somebody!" Ishway said meaningly. Maling studied the penciled words.

"Well?" cried his wife.

"Send operator immediately. Cape Rip Supply ship sails from Halifax tomorrow night. This post requires fast operator with thorough experience shore-station work. Acknowledge."

He read it aloud slowly and looked up.

"What's bid about that?" Mrs. Maling said.

Ishway breathed heavily through his nostrils. "Everything! It's like transportation for life. A barren pile of rock, the loneliest station on the coast. Once they get you there, nothing but death or a writ of habeas corpus will ever set you free."

"Let's see," Maling said slowly. "Parrish? Blackburn? Hennessy? None of these boys can handle a fast wire. That leaves it up to you, Joram or MacOdrum."

"I," said Ishway thickly, "spent three years up there, which is plenty for one man's lifetime. I got away on the flat of my back with ptomaine poisoning. You can count Joram out, too. He came here from a ship with no previous shore-station experience." He looked up at the ancient apparatus and smiled grimly. "You can't get 'thorough experience' with this junk."

"What about MacOdrum?"

"All kinds of experience—including three years in France with a trench set. That's just behind him. Mac wants to see some life."

"We can't all do what we want," Maling said levelly, "even in these queer times."

"He'll resign first," Ishway said. "So would I."

Wise in his generation, Maling sighed. The colts must be gentled. Young men with a long war behind them were in no mood for discipline of any sort. They did their work efficiently, and they liked Pete Maling because he was a good fellow, but they would not be ordered anywhere if they did not want to go. In another year or two perhaps, when this intoxicating freedom had grown stale—but in the meantime there were jobs to burn. Ships laid down under wartime building programs were taking the water from every yard in North America. An operator with a first-class ticket could get a job anywhere, and in the States wages were high. Since the whole purpose in running this bull pen at Caribou was to keep a supply of operators on hand, a sudden irruption of resignations would attract some cold notice from headquarters. Why, it would be asked, was Maling unable to get along with his men?

His wife, pretending to read a copy of *Jack Canuck* in the corner, thought suddenly of young MacNeill. How nice that he was so inexperienced! He had just come out of the wilderness, and a return to it would mean the best years of his life wasted in desert air. There was something repellent about the mere thought. He was too fresh and burning, too utterly attractive, for a fate like that. In a perfectly virtuous way she was half in love with him. All the women of Caribou were in love with him. There was something about his monastic background that captured the feminine imagination. His good looks, his modesty, his athletic frame, his naive mind, all added to the fascination, and his droll preference for the society of men made him irresistible. Women were all eager, too eager, to be charming to him.

And the curious thing was that men liked him. They had come to the rink prepared to see him bumped into unconsciousness, had swarmed upon the ice howling for a chance to beat his head off, but they had gone away in reluctant admiration. That hard-fisted, hot-eyed passion on the ice had caught their respect, just as it stirred in respectable matrons and spinsters the most unaccountable yearnings. And apart from his physical charm were his rare intelligence and the unusual education hammered into it by that prim schoolma'am his

mother. He would go far. The world lay at the feet of such a young man.

"I'll go," said young MacNeill

"But you can't!" gasped Mrs Maling

"I've had a lifetime of experience," he added calmly. "I've passed for a first-class ticket I can send and receive at thirty words a minute and keep it up all day. I've heard Cape R<sup>ip</sup> a thousand times, and I can say without boasting that I'm as good as any operator they've got "

It was the perfect solution to Maling's problem. He opened his mouth to take up the young idiot before something changed his mind, but Mrs Maling caught his eye. He hesitated a moment, licking his lips

"Look here, MacNeill. You don't want to go up there. It's worse than Cap D'Amour "

MacNeill stiffened. "What's wrong with Cap D'Amour?"

"What's wrong with Caribou?" demanded Mrs Maling. She was getting angry. "Do you realize every girl in the place is mad about you? Is it possible you don't know that women, women everywhere, are ready to grovel at the feet of a man like you? Doesn't that mean anything to you?"

MacNeill regarded her with puzzled resentment. "You're joking, Mrs Maling. But women are the trouble—saving your presence, ma'am. There are too many. I never—my mother told me to keep away from women, but how can I when the world is full of them? She told me not to use my fists on other men, too, and I've been brawling. I want to go to Cape Rip and kind of sort myself out "

"Haven't you any ambition?" Mrs Maling said. It was incredible.

"Yes," said the man from Cap D'Amour. "I want to be the best operator on the coast "

Maling pursed his lips, raised his eyebrows, and shrugged. Under the sardonic eyes of Ishway he reached for a service message pad and scrawled the fateful words. His wife sank back in the shabby arm-chair and closed her eyes. Whatever the future held for the young god from Cap D'Amour, it was clear that Peter Maling was in for an uncomfortable night.

# A WEDDING GIFT

by JOHN. TAINTOR FOOTE

(1923)

*Neither of the editors of this volume is much of a fisherman, and we had to turn to our angler friends for direction. Their suggestions were many, but there wasn't a single consultant who didn't start out "Well, of course, there's John Taintor Foote's The Wedding Gift, and then . . ." Every fishing enthusiast knows the hilarious saga of George Baldwin Potter, whose obsession with the dry fly clashes so constantly with his wife's interests. Yet comparatively few nonfishermen do and to these we say that the fresh meeting with this extremely funny story was for us easily one of the greatest rewards for putting together this collection. A Wedding Gift was written in America's Prohibition era, but only the references to hip-pocket flasks date it at all.*

**G**EORGE BALDWIN POTTER is a purist. That is to say, he either takes trout on a dry fly or he does not take them at all. He belongs to a number of fishing clubs, any member of which might acquire his neighbor's wife, beat his children or poison a dog and still cast a fly, in all serenity, upon club waters; but should he impale on a hook a lowly though succulent worm and immerse the creature in those same waters it would be better that he send in his resignation at

once, sooner than face the shaken committee that would presently wait upon him.

George had become fixed in my mind as a bachelor. This, of course, was a mistake. I am continually forgetting that purists rush into marriage when approaching or having just passed the age of forty. The psychology of this is clear.

For twenty years, let us say, a purist's life is completely filled by his efforts to convert all reasonable men to his own particular method of taking trout. He thinks, for example, that a man should not concern himself with more than a dozen types of standard flies. The manner of presenting them is the main consideration. Take any one of these flies, then, and place it, by means of an eight-foot rod, a light, tapered line and a mist-colored leader of reasonable length, on fast water—if you want trout. Of course, if you want to listen to the birds and look at the scenery, fish the pools with a long line and a twelve-foot leader. Why, it stands to reason that—

The years go by as he explains these vital facts patiently, again and again, to Smith and Brown and Jones. One wet, cold spring, after fighting a muddy stream all day, he re-explains for the better part of an evening and takes himself, somewhat wearily, upstairs. The damp and chill of the room at whatever club he may be fishing is positively tomblike. He can hear the rain drumming on the roof and swishing against the windows. The water will be higher than ever tomorrow, he reflects, as he puts out the lights and slides between the icy sheets. Steeped to the soul in cheerless dark, he recalls numbly that when he first met Smith and Brown and Jones they were fishing the pools with a long line. That was, let's see—fifteen—eighteen—twenty years ago. Then he must be forty. It isn't possible! Yes, it is a fact. It is also a fact that Smith and Brown and Jones are still fishing the pools with a long line.

In the first faint light of dawn he falls into an uneasy, muttering slumber. The dark hours between have been devoted to intense thought and a variety of wiggles which have not succeeded in keeping the bedclothes against his shoulder blades.

Sometime within the next six months you will remember that you have forgotten to send him a wedding present.

George, therefore, having arrived at his fortieth birthday, announced his engagement shortly thereafter. Quite by chance I ran across his bride-to-be and himself a few days before the ceremony and joined them at lunch. She was a blonde in the early twenties, with wide blue eyes and a typical rose-and-white complexion. A rush-

ing, almost breathless account of herself, which she began the moment we were seated, was curious, I thought. It was as though she feared an interruption at any moment. I learned that she was an only child, born and reared in Greater New York; that her family had recently moved to New Rochelle; that she had been shopping madly for the past two weeks; that she was nearly dead, but that she had some adorable things.

At this point George informed me that they would spend their honeymoon at a certain fishing club in Maine. He then proceeded to describe the streams and lakes in that section at some length—during the rest of the luncheon, as a matter of fact. His fiancée, who had fallen into a wordless abstraction, only broke her silence with a vague murmur as we parted.

Owing to this meeting I did not forget to send a wedding present. I determined that my choice should please both George and his wife through the happy years to come.

If I had had George only to consider, I could have settled the business in two minutes at a sporting-goods store. Barred from these for obvious reasons, I spent a long day in a thoroughly exhausting search. Late in the afternoon I decided to abandon my hopeless task. I had made a tremendous effort and failed. I would simply buy a silver doodab and let it go at that.

As I staggered into a store with the above purpose in view, I passed a showcase devoted to fine china and halted as my eyes fell on a row of fish plates backed by artfully rumpled blue velvet. The plates proved to be hand painted. On each plate was one of the different varieties of trout, curving up through green depths to an artificial fly just dropping on the surface of the water.

In an automatic fashion I indicated the plates to a clerk, paid for them, gave him my card and the address and fled from the store. Sometime during the next twenty-four hours it came to me that George Potter was not among my nearest and dearest. Yet the unbenevolent sum I had left with that clerk in exchange for those fish plates could be justified in no other way.

I thought this fact accounted for the sort of frenzy with which George flung himself upon me when next we met, some two months later. I had been weekending in the country and encountered him in the Grand Central Station as I emerged from the lower level. For a long moment he wrung my hand in silence, gazing almost feverishly into my face. At last he spoke:

"Have you got an hour to spare?"



It occurred to me that it would take George an hour at least to describe his amazed delight at the splendor of my gift. The clock above Information showed that it was 12:45. I therefore suggested that we lunch together.

He, too, glanced at the clock, verified its correctness by his watch and seized me by the arm.

"All right," he agreed, and was urging me toward the well-filled and somewhat noisy station café before I grasped his intention and tried to suggest that we go elsewhere. His hand only tightened on my arm.

"It's all right," he said; "good food, quick service—you'll like it."

He all but dragged me into the café and steered me to a table in the corner. I lifted my voice above an earnest clatter of gastronomical utensils and made a last effort.

"The Biltmore's just across the street."

George pressed me into my chair, shoved a menu card at me and addressed the waiter.

"Take his order." Here he jerked out his watch and consulted it again. "We have forty-eight minutes. Service for one. I shan't eat anything, or, no—bring me some coffee—large cup—black."

Having ordered mechanically, I frankly stared at George. He was dressed, I now observed, with unusual care. He wore a rather dashing gray suit. His tie, which was an exquisite shade of gray-blue, was embellished by a handsome pearl. The handkerchief, appearing above his breast pocket, was of the same delicate gray-blue shade as the tie. His face had been recently and closely shaven, also powdered; but above that smooth whiteness of jowl was a pair of curiously glittering eyes and a damp, a beaded brow. This he now mopped with his napkin.

"Good God," said I, "what is it, George?"

His reply was to extract a letter from his inside coat pocket and pass it across the table, his haunted eyes on mine. I took in its few lines at a glance:

Father has persuaded me to listen to what you call your explanation. I arrive Grand Central 2.45, daylight saving, Monday.

ISABELLE

Poor old George, I thought; some bachelor indiscretion; and now, with his honeymoon scarcely over, blackmail, a lawsuit, heaven only knew what.

"Who," I asked, returning the letter, "is Isabelle?"

To my distress, George again resorted to his napkin. Then, "My wife," he said.

"Your wife!"

George nodded.

"Been living with her people for the last month. Wish he'd bring that coffee. You don't happen to have a flask with you?"

"Yes, I have a flask." George brightened. "But it's empty. Do you want to tell me about your trouble? Is that why you brought me here?"

"Well, yes," George admitted. "But the point is—will you stand by me? That's the main thing. She gets in"—here he consulted his watch—"in forty-five minutes, if the train's on time." A sudden panic seemed to seize him. His hand shot across the table and grasped my wrist. "You've got to stand by me, old man—until the ice is broken. That's all I ask. Just stick until the train gets in. Then act as if you knew nothing. Say you ran into me here and stayed to meet her. I'll tell you what—say I didn't seem to want you to stay. Kid me about wanting her all to myself, or something like that. Get the point? It'll give me a chance to sort of—well, you understand."

"I see what you mean, of course," I admitted. "Here's your coffee. Suppose you have some and then tell me what this is all about—if you care to, that is."

"No sugar, no cream," said George to the waiter; "just pour it. Don't stand there waving it about—pour it, pour it!" He attempted to swallow a mouthful of steaming coffee, gurgled frightfully and grabbed his water glass. "Great jumping Jehoshaphat!" he gasped, when he could speak, and glared at the waiter, who promptly moved out into the sea of diners and disappeared among a dozen of his kind.

"Steady, George," I advised as I transferred a small lump of ice from my glass to his coffee cup.

George watched the ice dissolve, murmured, "Idiot," several times and presently swallowed the contents of the cup in two gulps.

"I had told her," he said suddenly, "exactly where we were going. She mentioned Narragansett several times—I'll admit that. Imagine—Narragansett! Of course I bought her fishing things myself. I didn't buy knickers or woollens or flannel shirts—naturally. You don't go around buying a girl breeches and underwear before you're married. It wouldn't be—well, it isn't done, that's all. I got her the sweetest three-ounce rod you ever held in your hand. I'll bet I could put out sixty feet of line with it against the wind. I got her a pair of English

waders that didn't weigh a pound. They cost me forty-five dollars. The rest of the outfit was just as good. Why, her fly box was a Truxton. I could have bought an American imitation for eight dollars. I know a lot of men who'll buy leaders for themselves at two dollars apiece and let their wives fish with any kind of tackle. I'll give you my word I'd have used anything I got her myself. I sent it all out to be packed with her things. I wanted her to feel that it was her own—not mine. I know a lot of men who give their wives a high-class rod or an imported reel and then fish with it themselves. What time is it?"

"Clock right up there," I said. But George consulted his watch and used his napkin distressingly again.

"Where was I?"

"You were telling me why you sent her fishing things out to her."

"Oh, yes! That's all of that. I simply wanted to show you that from the first I did all any man could do. Ever been in the Cuddiwink district?"

I said that I had not.

"You go in from Buck's Landing. A lumber tug takes you up to the head of Lake Owonga. Club guides meet you there and put you through in one day—twenty miles by canoe and portage up the west branch of the Penobscot; then nine miles by trail to Lost Pond. The club's on Lost Pond. Separate cabins, with a main dining and loafing camp, and the best squaretail fishing on earth—both lake and stream. Of course, I don't fish the lakes. A dry fly belongs on a stream and nowhere else. Let me make it perfectly clear."

George's manner suddenly changed. He hunched himself closer to the table, dropped an elbow upon it and lifted an expository finger.

"The dry fly," he stated, with a new almost combative ring in his voice, "is designed primarily to simulate not only the appearance of the natural insect but its action as well. This action is arrived at through the flow of the current. The moment you move a fly by means of a leader you destroy the—"

I saw that an interruption was imperative.

"Yes, of course," I said; "but your wife will be here in . . ."

It was pitiful to observe George. His new-found assurance did not flee—flee suggests a withdrawal, however swift—it was immediately and totally annihilated. He attempted to pour himself some coffee, take out his watch, look at the clock and mop his brow with his napkin at one and the same instant.

"You were telling me how to get to Lost Pond," I suggested.

"Yes, to be sure," said George. "Naturally you go in light. The

things you absolutely have to have—rods, tackle, waders, wading shoes, and so forth, are about all a guide can manage at the portages in addition to the canoe. You pack in extras yourself—change of underclothes, a couple of pairs of socks and a few toilet articles. You leave a bag of trunk at Buck's Landing. I explained this to her. I explained it carefully. I told her either a weekend bag or one small trunk. Herb Trescott was my best man. I left everything to him. I saw us on the train and handed me tickets and reservations just before we pulled out. I didn't notice in the excitement of getting away that he'd given me three trunk checks all stamped 'Excess.' I didn't notice it till the conductor showed up, as a matter of fact. Then I said, 'Darling, what in heaven's name have you brought three trunks for?' She said—I can remember her exact words—'Then you're not going to Narragansett?'

"I simply looked at her. I was too dumfounded to speak. At last I pulled myself together and told her that in three days we'd be whipping the best squaretail water in the world. I took her hand, I remember, and said, 'You and I together, sweetheart,' or something like that."

George sighed and lapsed into a silence which remained unbroken until his eye happened to encounter the face of the clock. He started and went on.

"We got to Buck's Landing, by way of Bangor, at six in the evening of the following day. Buck's Landing is a railroad station with grass growing between the ties, a general store and hotel combined, and a lumber wharf. The store keeps canned peas, pink-and-white-candy and felt boots. The hotel part is—well, it doesn't matter except that I don't think I ever saw so many deer heads; a few stuffed trout, but mostly deer heads. After supper the proprietor and I got the three trunks up to the largest room. We just got them in and that was all. The tug left for the head of the lake at seven next morning. I explained this to Isabelle. I said we'd leave the trunks there until we came out, and offered to help her unpack the one her fishing things were in. She said, 'Please go away!' So I went. I got out a rod and went down to the wharf. No trout there, I knew; but I thought I'd limber up my wrist. I put on a Cahill Number Fourteen—or was it Sixteen—"

George knitted his brows and stared intently but unseeingly at me for some little time.

"Call it a Sixteen," I suggested.

George shook his head impatiently and remained concentrated in thought.

"I'm inclined to think it was a Fourteen," he said at last. "But let it go; it'll come to me later. At any rate, the place was alive with big chub—a foot long, some of 'em I'll bet I took fifty—threw 'em back, of course. They kept on rising after it got dark I'd tell myself I'd go after one more cast. Each time I'd hook a big chub, and—well, you know how the time slips away.

"When I got back to the hotel all the lights were out. I lit matches until I got upstairs and found the door to the room. I'll never forget what I saw when I opened that door—never! Do you happen to know how many of the kind of things they wear a woman can get into one trunk? Well, she had three and she'd unpacked them all. She had used the bed for the gowns alone. It was piled with them—literally piled, but that wasn't a starter. Everywhere you looked was a stack of things with ribbons in 'em. There were enough shoes and stockings for a girls' school; silk stockings, mind you, and high-heeled shoes and slippers." Here George consulted clock and watch. "I wonder if that train's on time," he wanted to know.

"You have thirty-five minutes, even if it is," I told him; "go right ahead."

"Well, I could see something was wrong from her face. I didn't know what, but I started right in to cheer her up I told her all about the chub fishing I'd been having. At last she burst into tears. I won't go into the scene that followed. I'd ask her what was the matter and she'd say, 'Nothing,' and cry frightfully. I know a lot of men who would have lost their tempers under the circumstances, but I didn't; I give you my word I simply said, 'There, there,' until she quieted down. And that isn't all. After a while she began to show me her gowns. Imagine—at eleven o'clock at night, at Buck's Landing! She'd hold up a dress and look over the top of it at me and ask me how I liked it, and I'd say it was all right. I know a lot of men who wouldn't have sat there two minutes.

"At last I said, 'They're all all right, darling,' and yawned. She was holding up a pink dress covered with shiny dingle-dangles, and she threw the dress on the bed and all but had hysterics. It was terrible. In trying to think of some way to quiet her it occurred to me that I'd put her rod together and let her feel the balance of it with the reel I'd bought her—a genuine Fleetwood, mind you—attached. I looked around for her fishing things and couldn't find them. I'll tell

you why I couldn't find them." George paused for an impressive instant to give his next words the full significance due them. "They weren't there!"

"No?" I murmured weakly.

"No," said George. "And what do you suppose she said when I questioned her? I can give you her exact words—I'll never forget them. She said, 'There wasn't any room for them.'" Again George paused. "I ask you," he inquired at last, "I ask you as man to man what do you think of that?"

I found no adequate reply to this question and George, now thoroughly warmed up, rushed on.

"You'd swear I lost my temper then, wouldn't you? Well, I didn't. I did say something to her later, but I'll let you be the judge when we come to that. I'll ask you to consider the circumstances. I'll ask you to get Old Faithful in your mind's eye."

"Old Faithful?" I repeated. "Then you went to the Yellowstone later?"

"Yellowstone! Of course not! Haven't I told you we were already at the best trout water in America? Old Faithful was a squaretail. He'd been in the pool below Horseshoe Falls for twenty years, as a matter of record. We'll come to that presently. How are we off for time?"

"Thirty-one minutes," I told him. "I'm watching the clock—go ahead."

"Well, there she was, on a fishing trip with nothing to fish with. There was only one answer to that—she couldn't fish. But I went over everything she'd brought in three trunks and I'll give you my word she didn't have a garment of any sort you couldn't see through.

"Something had to be done and done quick, that was sure. I fitted her out from my own things with a sweater, a flannel shirt and a pair of knickerbockers. Then I got the proprietor up and explained the situation. He got me some heavy underwear and two pairs of woolen stockings that belonged to his wife. When it came to shoes it looked hopeless, but the proprietor's wife, who had got up, too, by this time, thought of a pair of boy's moccasins that were in the store and they turned out to be about the right size. I made arrangements to rent the room we had until we came out again to keep her stuff in, and took another room for the night—what was left of it, after she'd repicked what could stay in the trunks and arranged what couldn't so it wouldn't be wrinkled.

"I got up early, dressed and took my duffel down to the landing. I wakened her when I left the room. When breakfast was ready I

went to see why she hadn't come down. She was all dressed, sitting on the edge of the bed. I said, 'Breakfast is ready, darling,' but I saw by her face that something was wrong again. It turned out to be my knickers. They fitted her perfectly—a little tight in spots—except in the waist. They would simply have fallen off if she hadn't held them up.

"Well, I was going in so light that I only had one belt. The proprietor didn't have any—he used suspenders. Neither did his wife—she used—well, whatever they use. He got me a piece of clothesline and I knotted it at each end and ran it through the what-you-may-call-'ems of the knickers and tied it in front. The knickers sort of puckered all the way round, but they couldn't come down—that was the main thing. I said, 'There you are, darling.' She walked over and tilted the mirror of the bureau so that she could see herself from head to foot. She said, 'Who are going to be at this place where we are going?' I said, 'Some of the very best dry-fly men in the country.' She said, 'I don't mean them, I mean the women. Will there be any women there?'"

"I told her, certainly there would be women. I asked her if she thought I would take her into a camp with nothing but men. I named some of the women. Mrs. Fred Beal and Mrs. Brooks Carter and Talcott Ranning's sister and several more.

"She turned around slowly in front of the mirror, staring into it for a minute. Then she said, 'Please go out and close the door.' I said, 'All right, darling, but come right down. The tug will be here in fifteen minutes.'"

"I went downstairs and waited ten minutes, then I heard the tug whistle for the landing and ran upstairs again. I knocked at the door. When she didn't answer I went in. 'Where do you suppose she was?'"

I gave it up.

"In bed!" said George in an awe-struck voice. "In bed with her face turned to the wall, and listen, I didn't lose my temper as God is my judge. I rushed down to the wharf and told the tug captain I'd give him twenty-five dollars extra if he'd hold the boat till we came. He said all right and I went back to the room."

"The breeches had done it. She simply wouldn't wear them. I told her that at a fishing camp in Maine clothes were never thought of. I said, 'No one thinks of anything but trout, darling.' She said, 'I wouldn't let a fish see me looking like that.' " George's brow beaded suddenly. His hands dived searchingly into various pockets. "Got a cigarette? I left my case in my other suit."

He took a cigarette from me, lighted it with shaking fingers and inhaled deeply.

"It went on like that for thirty minutes. She was crying all the time, of course. I had started down to tell the tug captain it was all off, and I saw a woman's raincoat hanging in the hall. It belonged to someone up in one of the camps, the proprietor told me. I gave him seventy-five dollars to give to whoever owned it when he came out and took it upstairs. In about ten minutes I persuaded her to wear it over the rest of her outfit until we got to camp. I told her one of the women would be able to fix her up all right when we got there. I didn't believe it, of course. The women at camp were all old-timers; they'd gone in as light as the men; but I had to say something.

"We had quite a trip going in. The guides were at the head of the lake all right—Indian Joe and a new man I'd never seen, called Charlie. I told Joe to take Isabelle—he's one of the best canoe men I ever saw. I was going to paddle bow for my man, but I'd have bet a cooky Indian Joe could stay with us on any kind of water. We had to beat it right through to make camp by night. It's a good stiff trip, but it can be done. I looked back at the other canoe now and then until we struck about a mile of white water that took all I had. When we were through the other canoe wasn't in sight. The river made a bend there, and I thought it was just behind and would show up any minute.

"Well, it didn't show up and I began to wonder. We hit our first portage about ten o'clock and landed. I watched downstream for twenty minutes, expecting to sight the other canoe every instant. Then Charlie, who hadn't opened his head, said, 'Better go back,' and put the canoe in again. We paddled downstream for all that was in it. I was stiff with fright. We saw 'em coming about three miles lower down and back-paddled till they came up. Isabelle was more cheerful-looking than she'd been since we left New York, but Joe had that stony face an Indian gets when he's sore.

"I said, 'Anything wrong?' Joe just grunted and drove the canoe past us. Then I saw it was filled with wild flowers. Isabelle said she'd been picking them right off the banks all the way along. She said she'd only had to get out of the boat once, for the blue ones. Now, you can't beat that—not in a thousand years. I leave it to you if you can. Twenty miles of stiff current, with five portages ahead of us and a nine-mile hike at the end of that. I gave that Indian the devil for letting her do such a thing, and tipped the flowers into the Penobscot



when we unloaded for the first portage. She didn't speak to me on the portage, and she got into her canoe without a word.

"Nothing more happened going in, except this flower business had lost two hours, and it was so dark when we struck the swamp at Loon Lake that we couldn't follow the trail well and kept stumbling over down timber and stepping into bog holes. She was about fagged out by then, and the mosquitoes were pretty thick through there. Without any warning she sat down in the trail. She did it so suddenly I nearly fell over her. I asked her what was the matter and she said, 'This is the end'—just like that—'this is the end!' I said, 'The end of what, darling?' She said, 'Of everything!' I told her if she sat there all wet and muddy she'd catch her death. She said she hoped so. I said, 'It's only two miles more, darling. Just think, tomorrow we'll be on the best trout water in the world!' With that she said, 'I want my mother, my darling mother,' and bowed her head in her hands. Think it over, please; and remember, I didn't lose my temper. You're sure there's nothing left in your flask?"

"Not a drop, George," I assured him. "Go ahead; we've only twenty-five minutes."

George looked wildly at the clock, then at his watch.

"A man never has it when he wants it most. Have you noticed that? Where was I?"

"You were in the swamp."

"Oh, yes! Well, she didn't speak after that, and nothing I could say would budge her. The mosquitoes had got wind of us when we stopped and were coming in swarms. We'd be eaten alive in another ten minutes. So I told Joe to give his pack to Charlie and help me pick her up and carry her. Joe said, 'No, by damn!' and folded his arms. When an Indian gets sore he stays sore, and when he's sore he's stubborn. The mosquitoes were working on him good and plenty, though, and at last he said, 'Me carry packs. Charlie help carry—that.' He flipped his hand over in the direction of Isabelle and took the pack from Charlie."

"It was black as your hat by now, and the trail through there was only about a foot wide with swamp on each side. It was going to be some job getting her out of there. I thought Charlie and I would make a chair of our arms and stumble along with her some way; but when I started to lift her up she said, 'Don't touch me!' and got up and went on. A blessing if there ever was one. We got to camp at ten that night."

"She was stiff and sore next morning—you expect it after a trip like that—besides, she'd caught a little cold. I asked her how she felt, and she said she was going to die and asked me to send for a doctor and her mother. The nearest doctor was at Bangor and her mother was in New Rochelle. I carried her breakfast over from the dining camp to our cabin. She said she couldn't eat any breakfast, but she did drink a cup of coffee, telling me between sips how awful it was to die alone in a place like that.

"After she'd had the coffee she seemed to feel better. I went to the camp library and got *The Dry Fly on American Waters*, by Charles Darty. I consider him the soundest man in the country. He's better than Pell or Fawcett. My chief criticism of him is that in his chapter on Streams East of the Alleghenies—east of the Alleghenies, mind you—he recommends the Royal Coachman. I consider the Lead-Wing Coachman a serviceable fly on clear, hard-fished water; but the Royal—never! I wouldn't give it a shade over the Professor or the Montreal. Just consider the body alone of the Royal Coachman—never mind the wings and hackle—the body of the Royal is—"

"Yes, I know, George," I said; "but—"

I glanced significantly at the clock. George started, sighed, and resumed his narrative.

"I went back to the cabin and said, 'Darling, here is one of the most intensely interesting books ever written. I'm going to read it aloud to you. I think I can finish it today. Would you like to sit up in bed while I read?' She said she hadn't strength enough to sit up in bed, so I sat down beside her and started reading. I had read about an hour, I suppose, when she did sit up in bed quite suddenly. I saw she was staring at me in a queer, wild way that was really startling. I said, 'What is it, darling?' She said, 'I'm going to get up. I'm going to get up this instant.'

"Well, I was delighted, naturally. I thought the book would get her by the time I'd read it through. But there she was, as keen as mustard before I'd got well into it. I'll tell you what I made up my mind to do, right there. I made up my mind to let her use my rod that day. Yes, sir—my three-ounce Spinoza, and what's more, I did it."

George looked at me triumphantly, then lapsed into reflection for a moment.

"If ever a man did everything possible to—well, let it go. The main thing is, I have nothing to reproach myself with—nothing. Except—but we'll come to that presently. Of course, she wasn't ready for dry flies yet. I borrowed some wet flies from the club steward, got some

cushions for the canoe and put my rod together. She had no waders, so a stream was out of the question. The lake was better, anyway, that first day; she'd have all the room she wanted for her back cast.

"I stood on the landing with her before we got into the canoe and showed her just how to put out a fly and recover it. Then she tried it." A sort of horror came into George's face. "You wouldn't believe any one could handle a rod like that," he said huskily. "You couldn't believe it unless you'd seen it. Gimme a cigarette.

"I worked with her a half-hour or so and saw no improvement—none whatever. At last she said, 'The string is too long. I can't do anything with such a long string on the pole.' I told her gently—gently, mind you—that the string was an eighteen-dollar double-tapered Hurdman line, attached to a Gebhardt reel on a three-ounce Spinoza rod. I said, 'We'll go out on the lake now. If you can manage to get a rise, perhaps it will come to you instinctively.'

"I paddled her out on the lake and she went at it. She'd spat the flies down and yank them up and spat them down again. She hooked me several times with her back cast and got tangled up in the line herself again and again. All this time I was speaking quietly to her, telling her what to do. I give you my word I never raised my voice—not once—and I thought she'd break the tip every moment.

"Finally she said her arm was tired and lowered the rod. She'd got everything messed up with her last cast and the flies were trailing just over the side of the canoe. I said, 'Recover your cast and reel in, darling.' Instead of using her rod, she took hold of the leader close to the flies and started to pull them into the canoe. At that instant a little trout—couldn't have been over six inches—took the tail fly. I don't know exactly what happened, it was all over so quickly. I think she just screamed and let go of everything. At any rate, I saw my Spinoza bounce off the gunwale of the canoe and disappear. There was fifty feet of water just there. And now listen carefully: not one word did I utter—not one. I simply turned the canoe and paddled to the landing in absolute silence. No reproaches of any sort. Think that over!"

I did. My thoughts left me speechless. George proceeded:

"I took out a guide and tried dragging for the rod with a gang hook and heavy sinker all the rest of the day. But the gangs would only foul on the bottom. I gave up at dusk and paddled in. I said to the guide—it was Charlie—I said, 'Well, it's all over, Charlie.' Charlie said, 'I brought Mr. Carter in and he had an extra rod. Maybe you could borrow it. It's a four-ounce Meecham.' I smiled. I actually

smiled. I turned and looked at the lake. 'Charlie,' I said, 'somewhere out there in that dark water, where the eye of man will never behold it again, is a three-ounce Spinoza—and you speak of a Meecham.' Charlie said, 'Well, I just thought I'd tell you.' I said, 'That's all right, Charlie. That's all right.' I went to the main camp, saw Jean, the head guide, and made arrangements to leave the next day. Then I went to our cabin and sat down before the fire. I heard Isabelle say something about being sorry. I said, 'I'd rather not talk about it, darling. If you don't mind, we'll never mention it again.' We sat there in silence, then, until dinner.

"As we got up from dinner, Nate Griswold and his wife asked us to play bridge with them that evening. I'd told no one what had happened, and Nate didn't know, of course. I simply thanked him and said we were tired, and we went back to our cabin. I sat down before the fire again. Isabelle seemed restless. At last she said, 'George.' I said, 'What is it, darling?' She said, 'Would you like to read to me from that book?' I said, 'I'm sorry, darling; if you don't mind I'll just sit here quietly by the fire.'

"Somebody knocked at the door after a while. I said, 'Come in.' It was Charlie. I said, 'What is it, Charlie?' Then he told me that Bob Frazer had been called back to New York and was going out next morning. I said, 'Well, what of it?' Charlie said, 'I just thought you could maybe borrow his rod.' I said, 'I thought you understood about that, Charlie.' Charlie said, 'Well, that's it. Mr. Frazer's rod is a three-ounce Spinoza.'

"I got up and shook hands with Charlie and gave him five dollars. But when he'd gone I began to realize what was before me. I'd brought in a pint flask of prewar Scotch. Prewar—get that! I put this in my pocket and went over to Bob's cabin. Just as I was going to knock I lost my nerve. I sneaked away from the door and went down to the lake and sat on the steps of the canoe landing. I sat there for quite a while and took several nips. At last I thought I'd just go and tell Bob of my loss and see what he said. I went back to his cabin and this time I knocked. Bob was putting a few odds and ends in a shoulder pack. His rod was in its case, standing against the wall.

"I said, 'I hear you're going out in the morning.' He said, 'Yes, curse it, my wife's mother has to have some sort of a damned operation or other.' I said, 'How would a little drink strike you, Bob?' He said, 'Strike me! Wait a minute! What kind of a drink?' I took out the flask and handed it to him. He unscrewed the cap and held the flask

to his nose. He said, 'Great heavens above, it smells like—' I said, 'It is.' He said, 'It can't be!' I said, 'Yes, it is.' He said, 'There's a trick in it somewhere.' I said, 'No, there isn't—I give you my word.' He tasted what was in the flask carefully. Then he said, 'I call this white of you, George,' and took a good stiff snort. When he was handing back the flask he said, 'I'll do as much for you some day, if I ever get the chance.' I took a snifter myself.

"Then I said, 'Bob, something awful has happened to me. I came here to tell you about it.' He said, 'Is that so? Sit down.' I sat down and told him. He said, 'What kind of a rod was it?' I said, 'A three-ounce Spinoza.' He came over and gripped my hand without a word. I said, 'Of course, I can't use anything else.' He nodded, and I saw his eyes flicker toward the corner of the room where his own rod was standing. I said, 'Have another drink, Bob.' But he just sat down and stared at me. I took a good stiff drink myself. Then I said, 'Under ordinary circumstances, nothing on earth could hire me to ask a man to—' I stopped right there.

"Bob got up suddenly and began to walk up and down the room. I said, 'Bob, I'm not considering myself—not for a minute. If it was last season, I'd simply have gone back tomorrow without a word. But I'm not alone any more I've got the little girl to consider. She's never seen a trout taken in her life—think of it, Bob! And here she is, on her honeymoon, at the best water I know of. On her honeymoon, Bob!' I waited for him to say something, but he went to the window and stared out, with his back to me. I got up and said good night and started for the door. Just as I reached it he turned from the window and rushed over and picked up his rod. He said, 'Here, take it,' and put the rod case in my hands. I started to try to thank him, but he said, 'Just go ahead with it,' and pushed me out the door."

The waiter was suddenly hovering above us with his eyes on the dishes.

"Now what do you want?" said George.

"Never mind clearing here," I said. "Just bring me the check. Go ahead, George."

"Well, of course, I can't any more than skim what happened finally, but you'll understand. It turned out that Ernie Payton's wife had an extra pair of knickers and she loaned them to Isabelle. I was waiting outside the cabin while she dressed next morning, and she called out to me; 'Oh, George, they fit!' Then I heard her begin to sing. She was a different girl when she came out to go to breakfast. She was al-

most smiling. She'd done nothing but slink about the day before. Isn't it extraordinary what will seem important to a woman? Gimme a cigarette."

"Fifteen minutes, George," I said as I supplied him.

"Yes, yes, I know. I fished the Cuddiwink that day. Grand stream, grand. I used a Pink Lady—first day on a stream with Isabelle—little touch of sentiment—and it's a darn good fly. I fished it steadily all day. Or did I try a Seth Green about noon? It seems to me I did, now that I recall it. It seems to me that where the Katahdin brook comes in I—"

"It doesn't really matter, does it, George?" I ventured.

"Of course. it matters!" said George decisively. "A man wants to be exact about such things. The precise details of what happens in a day's work on a stream are of real value to yourself and others. Except in the case of a record fish, it isn't important that you took a trout; it's exactly how you took him that's important."

"But the time, George," I protested.

He glanced at the clock, swore softly, mopped his brow—this time with the blue-gray handkerchief—and proceeded.

"Isabelle couldn't get into the stream without waders, so I told her to work along the bank a little behind me. It was pretty thick along there, second growth and vines mostly; but I was putting that Pink Lady on every foot of good water and she kept up with me easily enough. She didn't see me take many trout, though. I'd look for her, after landing one, to see what she thought of the way I'd handled the fish, and almost invariably she was picking ferns or blueberries, or getting herself untangled from something. Curious things, women. Like children, when you stop to think of it."

George stared at me unseeingly for a moment.

"And you never heard of Old Faithful?" he asked suddenly "Evidently not, from what you said a while ago. Well, a lot of people have. believe me. Men have gone to the Cuddiwink district just to see him. As I've already told you, he lay beside a ledge in the pool below Horseshoe Falls. Almost nothing else in the pool. He kept it cleaned out. Worst sort of cannibal, of course—all big trout are. That was the trouble—he wanted something that would stick to his ribs. No flies for him. Did his feeding at night.

"You could see him dimly if you crawled out on a rock that jutted above the pool and looked over. He lay in about ten feet of water, right by his ledge. If he saw you he'd back under the ledge, slowly, like a submarine going into dock. Think of the biggest thing you've

ever seen, and that's the way Old Faithful looked, just lying there as still as the ledge. He never seemed to move anything, not even his gills. When he backed in out of sight he seemed to be drawn under the ledge by some invisible force.

"Ridgway—R. Campbell Ridgway—you may have read his stuff, *Brethren of the Wild*, that sort of thing—claimed to have seen him move. He told me about it one night. He said he was lying with just his eyes over the edge of the rock, watching the trout. Said he'd been there an hour, when down over the falls came a young red squirrel. It had fallen in above and been carried over. The squirrel was half drowned, but struck out feebly for shore. Well, so Ridgway said—Old Faithful came up and took Mister Squirrel into camp. No hurry; just came drifting up, sort of inhaled the squirrel and sank down to the ledge again. Never made a ripple, Ridgway said—just business.

"I'm telling you all this because it's necessary that you get an idea of that trout in your mind. You'll see why in a minute. No one ever had hold of him. But it was customary, if you fished the Cuddiwink, to make a few casts over him before you left the stream. Not that you ever expected him to rise. It was just a sort of gesture. Everybody did it.

"Knowing that Isabelle had never seen trout taken before, I made a day of it—naturally. The trail to camp leaves the stream just at the falls. It was pretty late when we got to it. Isabelle had her arms full of—heaven knows what—flowers and grass and ferns and fir branches and colored leaves. She'd lugged the stuff for hours. I remember once that day I was fighting a fourteen inch fish in swift water and she came to the bank and wanted me to look at a ripe blackberry—I think it was—she'd found. How does that strike you? And listen! I said, 'It's a beauty, darling. That's what I said—or something like that. . . Here, don't you pay that check! Bring it here, waiter!'

"Go on, George!" I said. "We haven't time to argue about the check. You'd come to the trail for camp at the falls."

"I told Isabelle to wait at the trail for a few minutes, while I went below the falls and did the customary thing for the edification of Old Faithful. I only intended to make three or four casts with the Number Twelve Fly and the hair-fine leader I had on, but in getting down to the pool I hooked the fly in a bush. In trying to loosen it I stumbled over something and fell. I snapped the leader like a thread, and since I had to put on another, I tied on a fairly heavy one as a matter of form.

"I had reached for my box for a regulation fly of some sort when I

remembered a fool thing that Billy Roach had given me up on the Beaverkill the season before. It was fully two inches long; I forget what he called it. He said you fished it dry for bass or large trout. He said you worked the tip of your rod and made it wiggle like a dying minnow. I didn't want the contraption, but he'd borrowed some fly oil from me and insisted on my taking it. I'd stuck it in the breast pocket of my fishing jacket and forgotten it until then.

"Well, I felt in the pocket and there it was. I tied it on and went down to the pool. Now let me show you the exact situation." George seized a fork. "This is the pool." The fork traced an oblong figure on the tablecloth. "Here is Old Faithful's ledge." The fork deeply marked this impressive spot. "Here are the falls, with white water running to here. You can only wade to this point here, and then you have an abrupt six-foot depth. 'But you can put a fly from here to here with a long line,' you say. No, you can't. You've forgotten to allow for your back cast. Notice this bend here? That tells the story. You're not more than twenty feet from a lot of birch and what not, when you can no longer wade. 'Well then, it's impossible to put a decent fly on the water above the sunken ledge,' you say. It looks like it, but this is how it's done: right here is a narrow point running to here, where it dwindles off to a single flat rock. If you work out on the point you can jump across to this rock—situated right here—and there you are, with about a thirty-foot cast to the sunken ledge. Deep water all around you, of course, and the rock is slippery; but—there you are. Now notice this small cove, right here. The water from the falls rushes past it in a froth, but in the cove it forms a deep eddy, with the current moving round and round, like this " George made a slow circular motion with the fork. "You know what I mean?"

I nodded.

"I got out on the point and jumped to the rock, got myself balanced, worked out the right amount of line and cast the dingaree Bill had forced on me, just above the sunken ledge. I didn't take the water lightly and I cast again, but I couldn't put it down decently. It would just flop in—too much weight and too many feathers. I suppose I cast it a dozen times, trying to make it settle like a fly. I wasn't thinking of trout—there would be nothing in there except Old Faithful—I was just monkeying with this doodlebug thing, now that I had it on.

"I gave up at last and let it lie out where I had cast it. I was standing there looking at the falls roaring down, not thinking about anything in particular, when I remembered Isabelle, waiting up on the trail. I raised my rod preparatory to reeling in and the what-you-may-



call-'em made a kind of a dive and wiggle out there on the surface. I reached for my reel handle. Then I realized that the thingamajig wasn't on the water. I didn't see it disappear, exactly; I was just looking at it, and then it wasn't there. 'That's funny,' I thought, and struck instinctively. Well, I was fast—so it seemed—and no snags in there. I gave it the butt three or four times, but the rod only bowed and nothing budged. I tried to figure it out. I thought perhaps a water-logged timber had come diving over the falls and upended right there. Then I noticed the rod take more of a bend and the line began to move through the water. It moved out slowly, very slowly, into the middle of the pool. It was exactly as though I was hooked onto a freight train just getting under way.

"I knew what I had hold of then, and yet I didn't believe it. I couldn't believe it. I kept thinking it was a dream, I remember. Of course, he could have gone away with everything I had any minute if he'd wanted to, but he didn't. He just kept moving slowly, round and round the pool. I gave him what pressure the tackle would stand, but he never noticed a little thing like that, just kept moving around the pool for hours, it seemed to me. I'd forgotten Isabelle; I admit that. I'd forgotten everything on earth. There didn't seem to be anything else on earth, as a matter of fact, except the falls and the pool and Old Faithful and me. At last Isabelle showed up on the bank above me, still lugging her ferns and what not. She called down to me above the noise of the falls. She asked me how long I expected her to wait alone in the woods, with night coming on.

"I hadn't had the faintest idea how I was going to try to land the fish until then. The water was boiling past the rock I was standing on, and I couldn't jump back to the point without giving him slack and perhaps falling in. I began to look around and figure. Isabelle said, 'What on earth are you doing?' I took off my landing net and tossed it to the bank. I yelled, 'Drop that junk quick and pick up that net!' She said, 'What for, George?' I said, 'Do as I tell you and don't ask questions!' She laid down what she had and picked up the net and I told her to go to the cove and stand ready.

"She said, 'Ready for what?' I said, 'You'll see what presently. Just stand there.' I'll admit I wasn't talking quietly. There was the noise of the falls to begin with, and—well, naturally I wasn't.

"I went to work on the fish again. I began to educate him to lead. I thought if I could lead him into the cove he would swing right past Isabelle and she could net him. It was slow work—a three-ounce rod—imagine! Isabelle called, 'Do you know what time it is?' I told her

to keep still and stand where she was. She didn't say anything more after that.

"At last the fish began to come. He wasn't tired—he'd never done any fighting, as a matter of fact—but he'd take a suggestion as to where to go from the rod. I kept swinging him nearer and nearer the cove each time he came around. When I saw he was about ready to come I yelled to Isabelle: 'I said, 'I'm going to bring him right past you, close to the top. All you have to do is to net him.'"

"When the fish came round again I steered him into the cove. Just as he was swinging past Isabelle the stuff she'd been lugging began to roll down the bank. She dropped the landing net on top of the fish and made a dive for those leaves and grasses and things. Fortunately the net handle lodged against the bank, and after she'd put her stuff in a nice safe place she came back and picked up the net again. I never uttered a syllable. I deserve no credit for that. The trout had made a surge and shot out into the pool and I was too busy just then to give her any idea of what I thought.

"I had a harder job getting him to swing in again. He was a little leery of the cove, but at last he came. I steered him toward Isabelle and lifted him all I dared. He came up nicely, clear to the top. I yelled, 'Here he comes! For God's sake, don't miss him!' I put every thing on the tackle it would stand and managed to check the fish for an instant right in front of Isabelle.

"And this is what she did: it doesn't seem credible—it doesn't seem humanly possible; but it's a fact that you'll have to take my word for. She lifted the landing net above her head with both hands and brought it down on top of the fish with all her might!"

George ceased speaking. Despite its coating of talcum powder, I was able to detect an additional pallor in his countenance.

"Will I ever forget it as long as I live?" he inquired at last.

"No, George," I said, "but we've just exactly eleven minutes left."

George made a noticeable effort and went on:

"By some miracle the fish stayed on the hook; but I got a faint idea of what would have happened if he'd taken a real notion to fight. He went around that pool so fast it must have made him dizzy. I heard Isabelle say, 'I didn't miss him, George', and then—well, I didn't lose my temper; you wouldn't call it that exactly. I hardly knew what I said. I'll admit I shouldn't have said it. But I did say it; no doubt of that; no doubt of that whatever."

"What was it you said?" I asked.

George looked at me uneasily.

"Oh, the sort of thing a man would say impulsively—under the circumstances "

"Was it something disparaging about her?" I inquired

"Oh, no," said George, "nothing about her I simply intimated—in a somewhat brutal way, I suppose—that she'd better get away from the pool—er—not bother me any more is what I meant to imply "

For the first time since George had chosen me for a confidant I felt a lack of frankness on his part

"Just what did you say, George?" I insisted

"Well, it wasn't altogether my words," he evaded "It was the tone I used, as much as anything Of course, the circumstances would excuse— Still, I regret it I admit that I've told you so plainly "

There was no time in which to press him further

"Well what happened then?" I asked

"Isabelle just disappeared She went up the bank, of course, but I didn't see her go Old Faithful was still nervous and I had to keep my eye on the line He quieted down in a little while and continued to promenade slowly around the pool I suppose this kept up for half an hour more Then I made up my mind that something had to be done I turned very carefully on the rock lowered the tip until it was on a line with the fish, turned the rod under my arm until it was pointing behind me and jumped

"Of course I had to give him slack, but I kept my balance on the point by the skin of my teeth and when I raised the rod he was still on I worked to the bank, giving out line, and crawled under some bushes and things and got around to the cove at last Then I started to work again to swing him into the cove, but absolutely nothing doing I could lead him anywhere except into the cove He'd had enough of that, I didn't blame him, either

"To make a long story short, I stayed with him for two hours For a while it was pretty dark, but there was a good sized moon that night, and when it rose it shone right down on the pool through a gap in the trees fortunately My wrist was gone completely, but I managed to keep some pressure on him all the time, and at last he forgot about what had happened to him in the cove I swung him in and the current brought him past me He was on his side by now I don't think he was tired even then—just discouraged I let him drift over the net, heaved him out on the bank and sank down beside him, absolutely all in I couldn't have got to my feet on a bet I just sat there in a sort of daze and looked at Old Faithful, gleaming in the moonlight

"After a half-hour's rest I was able to get up and go to camp I

planned what I was going to do on the way. There was always a crowd in the main camp living room after dinner. I simply walked into the living room without a word and laid Old Faithful on the center table.

"Well, you can imagine faintly what happened. I never got any dinner—couldn't have eaten any, as a matter of fact. I didn't even get a chance to take off my waders. By the time I'd told just how I'd done it to one crowd, more would come in and look at Old Faithful; and then stand and look at me for a while; and then make me tell it all over again. At last everybody began to dig up anything they had with a kick in it. Almost every one had a bottle he'd been hoarding. There was Scotch and gin and brandy and rye and a lot of experimental stuff. Art Bascom got a tin dishpan from the kitchen and put it on the table beside Old Faithful. He said 'Pour your contributions right in here, men.' So each man dumped whatever he had into the dishpan and everybody helped himself.

"It was great, of course." The biggest night of my life, but I hope I'll never be so dog-tired again. I felt as though I'd taken a beating. After they'd weighed Old Faithful—nine pounds five and a half ounces; and he'd been out of water two hours—I said I had to go to bed, and went.

"Isabelle wasn't in the cabin. I thought, in a hazy way, that she was with some of the women, somewhere. Don't get the idea I was stewed. But I hadn't had anything to eat, and the mixture in that dishpan was plain TNT.

"I fell asleep as soon as I hit the bed; slept like a log till daylight. Then I half woke up, feeling that something terrific had happened. For a minute I didn't know what; then I remembered what it was. I had landed Old Faithful on a three-ounce rod!

"I lay there and went over the whole thing from the beginning. until I came to Isabelle with the landing net. That made me look at where her head should have been on the pillow. It wasn't there. She wasn't in the cabin. I thought perhaps she'd got up early and gone out to look at the lake or the sunrise or something. But I got up in a hurry and dressed.

"Well, I could see no signs of Isabelle about camp. I ran into Jean just coming from the head guide's cabin and he said, 'Too bad about your wife's mother.' I said, 'What's that?' He repeated what he'd said, and added, 'She must be an awful sick woman.' Well, I got out of him finally that Isabelle had come straight up from the stream the evening before, taken two guides and started for Buck's Landing.

Jean had urged her to wait until morning, naturally; but she'd told him she must get to her mother at once, and took on so, as Jean put it, that he had to let her go.

"I said, 'Let me have Indian Joe, stern, and a good man, bow. Have 'em ready in ten minutes.' I rushed to the kitchen, drank two cups of coffee and started for Buck's Landing. We made the trip down in seven hours, but Isabelle had left with her trunks on the 10 40 train.

"I haven't seen her since. Went to her home once. She wouldn't see me; neither would her mother. Her father advised not forcing things—just waiting. He said he'd do what he could. Well, he's done it—you read the letter. Now you know the whole business. You'll stick, of course, and see me through just the first of it, old man. Of course, you'll do that, won't you? We'd better get down to the train now. Track Nineteen."

George rose from the table. I followed him from the cafe, across the blue-domed rotunda to a restraining rope stretched before the gloomy entrance to Track Nineteen.

"George," I said "one thing more just what did you say to her when she—"

"Oh, I don't know," George began vaguely.

"George," I interrupted, "no more beating about the bush. What did you say?"

I saw his face grow even more haggard, if possible. Then it mottled into a shade resembling the brick on an old colonial mansion.

"I told her—" he began in a low voice.

"Yes," I encouraged.

"I told her to get the hell out of there."

And now a vision was presented to my mind's eye; a vision of twelve fish plates, each depicting a trout curving up through green waters to an artificial fly. The vision extended on through the years. I saw Mrs. George Baldwin Potter ever gazing upon those rising trout and recalling the name on the card which had accompanied them to her door.

I turned and made rapidly for the main entrance of the Grand Central Station. In doing so I passed the clock above Information and saw that I still had two minutes in which to be conveyed by a taxicab far, far from the entrance to Track Nineteen.

I remember hearing the word "quitter" hurled after me by a hoarse, despairing voice.

# EL GALLARDO

from

BLOOD AND SAND

by VICENTE BLASCO IBAÑEZ

(1919)

*A number of non-Spanish writers have produced fiction and nonfiction of considerable merit about bullfighting, but it is probably not unfair to say that none of them has written of that sport spectacle ritual as knowingly and as movingly as Vicente Blasco Ibañez. Ibañez was a man of deep crusading spirit and Blood and Sand is but one of the many novels in which he sought to call his countrymen's attention to their aberrations and excesses. The novel begins with a magnificent picture—here presented in excerpt—of its hero, the matador Juan Gallardo, a poor boy risen to national hero as he stands at the zenith of his career. Ibañez goes on to recount Gallardo's early trials and to follow him to his tragic death in the ring he is unable to quit. Among other things, Blood and Sand undoubtedly represents the most savage indictment of the fickleness of sports mobs. In its final scene, as Gallardo lies dying, the crowd has already forgotten him and is clamoring for new heroes, new thrills.*

AS GALLARDO descended to the vestibule of the hotel, he saw that the street was filled with a noisy, excited crowd, as if some great event had just happened, and he could hear the buzz of a multitude whom he could not see through the doorway.

The landlord and all his family ran up with outstretched hands as if they were speeding him on a long journey.

"Good luck! May all go well with you!"

The servants, sinking all social distinctions, also shook his hand.

"Good luck, Don Juan!"

He turned round, smiling on every side, regardless of the anxious looks of the women of the hotel.

"Thanks, many thanks. . . . So long!"

He was another man now. Now that he had slung his dazzling cape over his shoulder, a careless smile lit up his face. He was pale with a moist pallor like a sick man, but he laughed with the joy of life, and, going to meet his public, he adopted his new attitude with the instinctive facility of a man who has to put on a fine air before his audience.

He swaggered arrogantly as he walked, puffing at the cigar in his left hand, and swayed from his hips under his gorgeous cape, stepping out firmly with the pride of a handsome man.

"Now then, gentlemen! Make way, please! Many thanks. . . . Many thanks!"

As he opened a way for himself he endeavored to protect his clothes from contact with the dirty crowd of ill-dressed but enthusiastic roughs who crowded round the hotel door. They had no money to go to the corrida, but they took advantage of this opportunity of shaking hands with the famous Gallardo, or even of touching some part of his clothing.

Close to the pavement was waiting a wagonette drawn by four mules, gaily caparisoned with tassels and little bells. Garabato had already hoisted himself onto the box seat with his bundle of cloth and swords. Behind sat three toreros with their capes on their knees, all wearing bright-colored clothes, embroidered as profusely as those of the Master, only with silver instead of gold.

Gallardo was obliged to defend himself with his elbows against the outstretched hands, and, amid the jostling of the crowd, he managed at last to reach the steps of the carriage. Amidst the general excitement he was finally unceremoniously hoisted into his seat from behind.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," he said curtly to his cuadrilla.

He took the seat nearest to the step so that all could see him, and he smiled and nodded his acknowledgment of the cries and shouts of applause of a variety of ragged women and newspaper boys.

The carriage dashed forward with all the strength of the spirited mules and filled the street with a merry tinkling. The crowd opened out to let the team pass, but many hung on to the carriage, in imminent danger of falling under its wheels. Sticks and hats were brandished in the air. A wave of enthusiasm swept over the crowd. It was one of those contagious outbursts which at times sway the masses, driving them mad, and making them shout without knowing why.

"Olé the brave fellows! . . . Viva España!"

Gallardo, still pale but smiling, saluted and repeated "Many thanks." He was moved by this outburst of popular enthusiasm, and proud of the fame that made them couple his name with that of his country.

A crowd of rough boys and disheveled girls ran after the carriage as fast as their legs could carry them, as if they expected to find something extraordinary at the end of their mad career.

For an hour previously the Calle de Alcalá had been a stream of carriages, between banks of crowded foot passengers, all hurrying to the outskirts of the town. Every sort of vehicle, ancient or modern, figured in this transient but confused and noisy migration, from the prehistoric charabanc, come to light like an anachronism, to the modern motorcar.

The trams passed along crowded bunches of passengers overflowing onto their steps. Omnibuses took up fares at the corner of the Calle de Sevilla, while the conductors shouted "Plaza! Plaza!" Mules covered with tassels, drawing carriages full of women in white mantillas and bright flowers, trotted along gaily to the tinkling of their silvery bells. Every moment could be heard exclamations of terror as some child, threading its way from one pavement to the other, regardless of the rushing stream of vehicles, emerged with the agility of a monkey from under the carriage wheels. Motor sirens shrieked and coachmen shouted. Newspaper sellers hawked leaflets giving a picture and history of the bulls which were going to fight, or the portraits and biographies of the famous toreros. Now and then a murmur of curiosity swelled the dull humming of the crowd.

Between the dark uniforms of the Municipal Guard rode slowly dressed horsemen on lean miserable creaks, wearing gold-embroidered jackets, wide beaver sombreros with a pompon on one side like a cockade, and yellow padding on their legs. These were the picadors, rough men of wild appearance who carried, clinging to the crupper behind their high Moorish saddles, a kind of devil dressed in red, the *mono sabio*,\* the servant who had taken the horse to their houses.

The cuadrillas passed by in open carriages. The gold embroidery of the toreros flashing in the afternoon sun seemed to dazzle the crowd and excite all its enthusiasm. "There's Fuentes!" "That's El Bomba!" cried the people, and, pleased at having recognized them, they followed the disappearing carriages with anxious eyes, just as if something were going to happen and they feared they would be late.

From the top of the Calle de Alcalá, the whole length of the broad

\* These servants have to strip the harness off dead horses and sprinkle sand over the pools of blood.



straight street could be seen lying white under the sun with its rows of trees beginning to turn green under the breath of spring. The balconies were black with onlookers and the roadway was only visible here and there amidst the swarming crowd which, on foot and in carriages, was making its way toward La Cibeles.

From this point the ground rose between lines of trees and buildings and the vista was closed by the Puerta de Alcalá outlined like a triumphal arch against the blue sky on which floated a few flecks of cloud like wandering swans.

Gallardo sat in silence, replying to the people only with his fixed smile. Since his first greeting to the banderilleros he had not uttered a word. They also were pale and silent with anxiety for the unknown. Now that they were amongst toreros they had laid aside as useless the swagger that was necessary in the presence of the public.

A mysterious inspiration seemed to tell the people of the coming of the last cuadrilla on its way to the Plaza. The group of ragamuffins who had run after the carriage acclaiming Gallardo had lost their breath and had scattered amongst the traffic, but all the same, people glanced behind them as though they felt the proximity of the famous torero and slackened their pace, lining the edge of the pavement so as to get a better view of him.

Women seated in the carriages rolling along turned their heads as they heard the tinkling bells of the trotting mules. Dull roars came from various groups standing on the pavement. These must have been demonstrations of enthusiasm, for many waved their sombreros whilst others greeted him by flourishing their sticks.

Gallardo replied to all these salutations with the smile of a barber's block. With his thoughts far away, he took little notice of them. By his side sat El Nacional, the banderillero in whom he placed most trust, a big, hard man, older by ten years than himself, with a grave manner and eyebrows that met between his eyes. He was well known in the profession for his kindness of heart and sterling worth, and also for his political opinions.

'Juan, you will not have to complain of Madrid,' said El Nacional. 'You have taken the public by storm.'

But Gallardo, as if he had not heard him but felt obliged to give vent to the thoughts that were weighing on him, replied, 'My heart tells me that something will happen this afternoon.'

As they arrived at La Cibeles the carriage stopped. A great funeral was passing through the Prado in the direction of Castellana and cut

\* The name of a fountain

through the avalanche of carriages coming from the Calle de Alcalá.

Gallardo turned still paler as he looked with terrified eyes at the passing of the silver cross and the procession of priests, who broke into a mournful chant as they gazed, some with aversion, others with envy, at the stream of godless people who were rushing to amuse themselves.

The espada hastened to take off his *montero*. His *banderilleros* did the same, with the exception of El Nacional.

"Curse you!" cried Gallardo. "Take off your cap, rascal!"

He glared at him as if about to strike him, fully convinced, by some confused intuition, that this impiety would bring down on him the greatest misfortunes.

"All right, I'll take it off," said El Nacional, with the sulkiness of a thwarted child, as he saw the cross moving off. "I'll take it off but it is to the dead man!"

They were obliged to stop for some time to let the funeral *cortège* pass.

"Bad luck!" murmured Gallardo, his voice trembling with rage. "Who can have thought of bringing a funeral across the way to the Plaza? Curse them! I said something would happen today!"

El Nacional smiled and shrugged his shoulders. "Superstition and fanaticism! God or Nature don't trouble about these things!"

These words, which increased the irritation of Gallardo, seemed to dispel the grave preoccupation of the other toreros, and they began to laugh at their companion, as indeed they always did when he aired his favorite phrase, "God or Nature."

As soon as the way was clear the carriage resumed its former speed, traveling as fast as the mules could trot and passing all the other vehicles which were converging on the Plaza. On arriving there it turned to the left, making for the door named "de Caballerizas" (of the stables), which led to the yards and stables, but compelled to pass slowly through the compact crowd.

Gallardo received another ovation as, followed by his *banderilleros*, he alighted from the carriage, pushing and elbowing his way in order to save his clothes from the touch of dirty hands, smiling greetings everywhere and hiding his right hand, which everybody wished to shake.

"Make way, please, gentlemen! . . . Many thanks."

The great courtyard between the main building of the Plaza and the boundary wall of its outbuildings was full of people who, before taking their seats, wished to get a near view of the bullfighters, whilst

on horseback, mounted high above the crowd, could be seen the picadors and the alguaciles, the policemen, in their seventeenth-century costumes.

On one side of the courtyard stood a row of single-story brick buildings, with vines trellised over the doors and pots of flowers in the windows. It was quite a small town of offices, workshops, stables and houses in which lived stablemen, carpenters and other servants of the bull ring.

The diestro made his way laboriously through the various groups, and his name passed from lip to lip amidst exclamations of admiration.

"Gallardo!" "Here is El Gallardo!" "Olé! Viva España!"

And he, with no thought but that of the adoration of the public, swaggered along, serene as a god and gay and self-satisfied, just as if he were attending a fete given in his honor.

Suddenly two arms were thrown round his neck and at the same time a strong smell of wine assailed his nostrils.

"A real man! My beauty! Three cheers for the heroes!"

It was a man of good appearance, a tradesman who had breakfasted with some friends, whose smiling vigilance he thought he had escaped but who were watching him from a short distance. He leaned his head on the espada's shoulder and let it remain there, as though he intended to drop off into a sleep of ecstasy in that position. Gallardo pushed and the man's friends pulled and the espada was soon free of this intolerable embrace, but the tippler, finding himself parted from his idol, broke out into loud shouts of admiration.

"Olé for such men! All nations of the earth should come and admire toreros like this, and die of envy! They may have ships, they may have money, but that's all nonsense! They have no bulls and no men like this! Hurrah, my lads! Long live my country!"

Gallardo crossed a large whitewashed hall, quite bare of furniture, where his professional companions were standing surrounded by admiring groups. Making his way through the crowd around a door, he entered a small, dark, and narrow room, at one end of which lights were burning. It was the chapel. An old picture called "The Virgin of the Dove" filled the back of the altar. On the table four tapers were burning, and several bunches of dusty moth-eaten muslin flowers stood in common pottery vases.

The chapel was full of people. The aficionados of humble class assembled in it so as to see the great men close at hand. In the darkness some stood bareheaded in the front row, whilst others sat on benches and chairs, the greater part of them turning their backs on

the Virgin; looking eagerly toward the door to call out a name as soon as the glitter of a gala dress appeared.

The banderilleros and picadors, poor devils who were going to risk their lives, the same as the "maestros," scarcely caused a whisper by their presence. Only the most fervent aficionados knew their nick-names.

Presently there was a prolonged murmur, a name repeated from mouth to mouth.

"Fuentes! It is el Fuentes!"

The elegant torero, tall and graceful, his cape loose over his shoulder, walked up to the altar, bending his knee with theatrical affection. The lights were reflected in his gypsy eyes and fell across the fine agile kneeling figure. After he had finished his prayer and crossed himself he rose, walking backwards toward the door, never taking his eyes off the image, like a tenor who retires bowing to his audience.

Gallardo was more simple in his piety. He entered montero in hand, his cape gathered round him, walking no less arrogantly, but when he came opposite the image he knelt with both knees on the ground, giving himself over entirely to his prayers and taking no notice of the hundreds of eyes fixed on him. His simple Christian soul trembled with fear and remorse. He prayed for protection with the fervor of ignorant men who live in continual danger and who believe in every sort of adverse influence and supernatural protection for the first time in the whole of that day he thought of his wife and his mother. Poor Carmen down in Seville waiting for his telegram! The Señora Angustias, tranquil with her fowls at the farm of La Rinconada, not knowing for certain where her son was fighting! . . . And he, here, with that terrible presentiment that something would happen that afternoon! Virgin of the Dove! Give a little protection! He would be good, he would forget "the rest," he would live as God commands.

His superstitious spirit being comforted by this empty repentance, he left the chapel still under its influence, with clouded eyes that did not see the people who obstructed his way.

Outside in the room where the toreros were waiting he was saluted by a clean-shaven gentleman in black clothes in which he appeared ill at ease.

"Bad luck!" murmured the torero, moving on. "As I said before, something will happen today!"

It was the chaplain of the Plaza, an enthusiast in Tauromachia, who had arrived with the holy oils concealed beneath his coat. He

was priest of the suburb of la Prosperidad and for years past had maintained a heated controversy with another parish priest in the center of Madrid who claimed a better right to monopolize the religious service of the Plaza. He came to the Plaza accompanied by a neighbor, who served him as sacristan in return for a seat for the corrida.

On these days he chose by turns from amongst his friends and protégés the one whom he wished to favor with the seat reserved for the sacristan. He hired a smart carriage, at the expense of the management, and, carrying under his coat the sacred vessel, started for the Plaza, where two front seats were kept for him close to the entrance for the bulls.

The priest entered the chapel with the air of a proprietor scandalized by the behavior of the public. All had their heads uncovered, but they were talking loudly, and some even smoking.

"Caballeros, this is not a café. You will do me the favor of going outside. The corrida is about to begin "

This news caused a general exodus, during which the priest took out the hidden oils and placed them in a painted wooden box. He, too, having concealed his sacred deposit, hurried out in order to reach his seat in the Plaza before the appearance of the caudrillas.

The crowd had vanished. Nobody was to be seen in the courtyard but men dressed in silk and gold embroidery, horsemen in yellow with large beavers, alguaciles on horseback, and the servants on duty in their liveries of blue and gold.

In the doorway called "De Caballos," under the arch forming the entrance to the Plaza, the toreros formed up for the procession with the promptitude which comes of constant practice. In front the maestros, some distance behind them the banderilleros, and beyond these again, in the courtyard outside, the clattering rear guard, the stern, steel-clad squadron of picadors, redolent of hot leather and manure, and mounted on skeleton horses with a bandage over one eye. In the far distance, like the baggage of this army, fidgeted the teams of mules destined to drag out the carcasses, strong, lively animals with shining skins, their harness covered with tassels and bells, and their collars ornamented with a small national flag.

At the other end of the archway, above the wooden barricade which closed the lower half, could be seen a shining patch of blue sky, the roof of the Plaza, and a section of the seats with its compact, swarming mass of occupants, amongst which fluttered fans and papers like gaily colored butterflies.

Through this arcade there swept a strong breeze, like the breath of

an immense lung, and faint harmonious sounds floated on the waves of air, betokening distant music, guessed at rather than heard.

Along the sides of the archway could be seen a row of heads—those of the spectators on the nearest benches who peered over in their anxiety to get the first possible glimpse of the heroes of the day.

Gallardo took his place in line with the other *espadas*. They neither spoke nor smiled, a grave inclination of the head being all the greeting that they exchanged. Each seemed wrapped in his own preoccupation, letting his thoughts wander far afield, or, perhaps, with the vacuity of deep emotion, thinking of nothing at all. Outwardly this preoccupation was manifested in an apparently unending arrangement and rearrangement of their capes—spreading them over the shoulder, folding the ends round the waist, or arranging them so that under this mantle of bright colors their legs, cased in silk and gold, should be free and without encumbrance. All their faces were pale, not with a dull pallor, but with the bright, hectic, moist shine of excitement. Their minds were in the arena, as yet invisible to them, and they felt the irresistible fear of things that might be happening on the other side of a wall, the terror of the unknown, the indefinite danger that is felt but not seen. How would this afternoon end?

From beyond the *cuadrillas* was heard the sound of the trotting of two horses, coming along underneath the outer arcades of the Plaza. This was the arrival of the *alguaciles* in their small black capeless mantles and broad hats surmounted with red and yellow feathers. They had just finished clearing the ring of all the intruding crowd and now came to place themselves as advance guard at the head of the *cuadrillas*.

The doorways of the arch were thrown wide open, as also were those of the barrier in front of them. The huge ring was revealed the real Plaza, an immense circular expanse of sand on which would be enacted the afternoon's tragedy, one which would excite the feelings and rejoicings of fourteen thousand spectators. The confused, harmonious sounds now became louder, resolving themselves into lively reckless music, a noisy, clanging triumphal march that made the audience hip and shoulder to its martial air. Forward, fine fellows!

The bullfighters, blinking at the sudden change, stepped out from darkness to light, from the silence of the quiet arcade to the roar of the ring, where the crowd on the tiers of benches, throbbing with excitement and curiosity, rose to its feet en masse, in order to obtain a better view.

The *toreros* advanced, dwarfed, immediately they trod the arena,

by the immensity of their surroundings. They seemed like brilliant dolls on whose embroideries the sunlight flashed in iridescent hues, and their graceful movements fired the people with the delight that a child takes in some marvelous toy. The mad impulse which agitates a crowd, sending a shiver down its backbone and giving it goose-pimples for no particular reason, affected the entire Plaza. Some applauded, others, more enthusiastic or more nervous, shouted, the music clanged, and in the midst of this universal tumult the cuadrillas advanced solemnly and slowly from the entrance door up to the presidential chair, making up for the shortness of their step by the graceful swing of their arms and the swaying of their bodies. Meanwhile on the circle of blue sky above the Plaza fluttered several white pigeons, terrified by the roar which arose from this crater of bricks.

They felt themselves different men as they advanced over the sand. They were risking their lives for something more than money. Their doubts and terrors of the unknown had been left outside the barricades. Now they trod the arena. They were face to face with their public. Reality had come. The longing for glory in their barbarous, ignorant minds, the desire to excel their comrades, the pride in their own strength and dexterity, all blinded them, making them forget all fears, and inspiring them with the daring of brute force.

Gallardo was quite transfigured. He drew himself up as he walked, wishing to appear the tallest. He moved with the arrogance of a conqueror, looking all round him with an air of triumph, as though his two companions did not exist. Everything was his, both the Plaza and the public. He felt himself at that moment capable of killing every bull alive on the broad pasture lands of Andalusia or Castille. All the applause was meant for him, he was quite sure of that. The thousands of feminine eyes, shaded by white mantillas, in the boxes or along the barriers, were fixed on him only, of that there could be no manner of doubt. The public adored him, and while he advanced smiling with pride, as though the ovation were intended for himself alone, he cast his eyes along the rows of seats, noticing the places where the largest groups of his partisans were massed, and ignoring those where his comrades' friends had congregated.

They saluted the president, monteros in hand, and then the brilliant parade broke up, peons\* and horsemen scattering in all directions. Whilst an alguacil caught in his hat the key thrown to him by the president, Gallardo walked toward the barrier behind which his

\* Banderilleros, Chulos, etc., who fight on foot.

most enthusiastic supporters stood and gave into their charge his beautiful cape, which was spread along the edge of the palisade, the sacred symbol of a faction.

His most enthusiastic partisans stood up, waving their hands and sticks to greet the matador, and loudly proclaiming their hopes. "Let us see what the lad from Seville will do!"

And he smiled as he leaned against the barrier, proud of his strength, repeating to all:

"Many thanks! He will do what he can."

It was not only his partisans who showed their high hopes on seeing him; everywhere he found adherents amongst the crowd, which anticipated deep excitement. He was a torero who promised "hule" \*—according to the expression of the aficionados, and such "hule" was likely to lead to a bed in the infirmary.

Everyone thought he was destined to die, gored to death in the Plaza, and for this very reason they applauded him with homicidal enthusiasm, with a barbarous interest, like that of the misanthrope who followed a tamer everywhere, awaiting the moment when he would be devoured by his wild beasts.

Gallardo laughed at the ancient aficionados, grave doctors of Tauromachia, who judged it impossible that an accident should happen if a torero conformed to the rules of the art. Rules forsooth! He ignored them and took no trouble to learn them. Bravery and audacity only were necessary to ensure victory. Almost blindly, with no other rule than his own temerity, no other help than his own bodily faculties, he had made a rapid career for himself, forcing outbursts of wonder from the people and astonishing them with his mad courage.

He had not, like other matadors, risen by regular steps, serving long years as picon and banderillero at the maestros' side. The bulls' horns caused him no fear. "Hunger gores worse," he said. The great thing was to rise quickly, and the public had seen him commence at once as espada and in a few years enjoy an immense popularity.

It admired him for the very reason which made a catastrophe so certain. It was inflamed with a horrible enthusiasm by the blindness with which this man defied death and paid him the same care and attention as are paid to a condemned man in the chapel. This torero was not one who held anything back; he gave them everything, including his life. He was worth the money he cost. And the crowd, with the brutality of those who watch danger from a safe place, ad-

\* Literally, excitement.



mired and hallooed on the hero. The more prudent shrugged their shoulders regarding him as a suicide playing with fate, and murmured, "As long as it lasts . . ."

Amid a clash of kettledrums and trumpets the first bull rushed out. Gallardo, with his working cloak devoid of ornament hanging on his arm, remained by the barrier, close to the benches where his partisans sat, disdainfully motionless, as though the eyes of the whole audience were fixed on him. That bull was for someone else. He would give signs of existence when his own bull came out. But the applause at the cloak play executed by his companions drew him out of this immobility, and in spite of his intentions he joined in the fray, performing several feats in which he showed more audacity than skill. The whole Plaza applauded him, roused by the delight they felt at his daring.

When Fuentes killed his first bull, and went toward the presidential chair saluting the crowd, Gallardo turned paler than before, as though any expression of gratification that was not for him was a studied insult. Now his turn had come; they would see great things. He did not know for certain what they might be, but he was disposed to startle the public.

As soon as the second bull came out, Gallardo, thanks to his mobility and his desire to shine, seemed to fill the whole Plaza. His cape was constantly close to the beast's muzzle. A picador of his own cuadrilla, the one named Potaje, was thrown from his horse and lay helpless close to the horns. The maestro, seizing the fierce beast's tail, pulled with such herculean strength that he obliged it to turn round till the dismounted rider was safe. This was a feat that the public applauded wildly.

When the play of the banderilleros began, Gallardo remained in the passage between the barriers awaiting the signal to kill. El Nacional with the darts in his hand challenged the bull in the center of the arena. There was nothing graceful in his movements, nor any proud daring, "simply the question of earning his bread." Down in Seville he had four little ones, who, if he died, would find no other father. He would do his duty and nothing more, stick in his banderillas like a journeyman of Tauromachia, not desiring applause, and trying to avoid hissing.

When he had stuck in the pair, a few on the vast tiers applauded, while others, alluding to his ideas, found fault with the banderillero in chaffing tones.

"Quit politics and strike better!"

And El Nacional, deceived by the distance, heard these shouts and acknowledged them smilingly like his master.

. When Gallardo leaped again into the arena, the crowd, hearing the blare of trumpets and drums which announced the final death stroke, became restless and buzzed with excitement. That matador was their own, now they would see something fine.

He took the muleta\* from the hands of Garabato, who offered it to him folded from inside the barrier, and drew the rapier, which his servant also presented to him. Then with short steps he went and stood in front of the president's chair, carrying his montero in one hand. All stretched out their necks, devouring their idol with their eyes, but no one could hear the "brindis." † The proud figure with its magnificent stature, the body thrown back to give more strength to his voice, produced the same effect on the masses as the most eloquent harangue. As he ended his speech, giving a half-turn and throwing his montero on the ground, the noisy enthusiasm broke out. Olé for the lad from Seville! Now they would see real sport! And the spectators looked at one another, mutely promising each other tremendous happenings. A shiver ran over all the rows of seats, as if they awaited something sublime.

Then silence fell on the crowd, a silence so deep that one would have thought that the Plaza had suddenly become empty. The life of thousands of people seemed concentrated in their eyes. No one seemed even to breathe.

Gallardo advanced slowly toward the bull, carrying the muleta resting against his stomach like a flag, and with sword waving in his other hand, swinging like a pendulum to his step.

Turning his head for an instant, he saw he was being followed by El Nacional and another peon of his cuadrilla, their cloaks on their arms ready to assist him.

"Go out, everybody!"

His voice rang out in the silence of the Plaza, reaching up to the farthest benches, and was answered by a roar of admiration . . . "Go out, everybody!" . . . He had said "go out" to everybody . . . What a man!

\* Square of red silk fastened to a wand—used to irritate the bull and to throw over his eyes as he charges.

† Brindis.—The matador has to declare before the president in whose honor—man or woman—he will kill the bull. There is an ancient formula used: "I dedicate this bull to so and so—either I will kill him or he will kill me." He then throws his montero on the ground behind him and fights the bull bare-headed.

He remained completely alone close to the beast, and instantly there was again silence. Very calmly he unrolled the muleta and spread it, advancing a few steps at the same time, till he flung it almost on the muzzle of the bull, who stood bewildered and frightened at the man's audacity.

The audience did not dare to speak; nor scarcely to breathe, but admiration flashed in their eyes. What a man! He was going up to the very horns. . . . He stamped impatiently on the sand with one foot, inciting the animal to attack, and the enormous mass of flesh, with its sharp defenses, fell bellowing upon him. The muleta passed over its horns, which grazed the tassels and fringes of the matador's costume. He remained firm in his place, his only movement being to throw his body slightly back. A roar from the masses replied to this pass of the muleta: "Olé!"

The brute turned, once more attacking the man and his rag, and the pass was again repeated amid the roars of the audience. The bull, each time more infuriated by the deception, again and again attacked the fighter, who repeated the passes with the muleta, scarcely moving off his ground, excited by the proximity of danger and the admiring acclamations of the crowd, which seemed to intoxicate him.

Gallardo felt the wild beast's snorting close to him. Its breath moist with slaver fell on his face and right hand. Becoming familiar with the feeling, he seemed to look on the brute as a good friend who was going to let himself be killed to contribute to his glory.

At last the bull remained quiet for a few instants as if tired of the game, looking with eyes full of somber reflection at this man and his red cloth, suspecting in his limited brain the existence of some stratagem that, by attack after attack, would lead him to his death.

Gallardo felt the great heartbeat of his finest feats. Now then! He caught the muleta with a circular sweep of his left hand, rolling it round the stick, and raised his right to the height of his eyes, standing with the sword bending down toward the nape of the brute's neck. A tumult of surprised protest broke from the crowd. "Don't strike!" shouted thousands of voices. "No! . . . No!"

It was too soon. The bull was not well placed, it would charge and catch him. He was acting outside all rules of the art. But what did rules or life itself signify to that reckless man!

Suddenly he threw himself forward with his sword at the same instant that the beast fell upon him. The encounter was brutal, savage. For an instant man and beast formed one confused mass and thus advanced a few paces. No one could see who was the conqueror—the

man with one arm and part of his body between the two horns, or the brute lowering his head and fighting to catch on those horns the brilliantly colored golden puppet which seemed to be slipping away from him.

At last the group separated. The muleta remained on the ground like a rag, and the fighter, his hands empty, emerged staggering from the impetus of the shock, till some distance away he recovered his equilibrium. His clothes were disordered, and the cravat floating outside the waistcoat was gashed and torn by the bull's horns.

The bull continued its rush with the impetus of the first charge. On its broad neck the red pommel of the sword, buried up to the hilt, scarcely could be seen. Suddenly it stopped short in its career, rolling with a painful curtsying motion; then folded its forelegs, bent its head till its bellowing muzzle touched the sand, and finally subsided in convulsions of agony.

It seemed as though the whole Plaza were falling down, as if all its bricks were rattling against one another; as if the crowd was going to fly in panic, when all rose suddenly to their feet, pale, trembling, gesticulating, waving their arms. Dead! What a sword thrust! . . . They had all thought for a second that the matador was impaled on the bull's horns, all thought they would assuredly see him fall bleeding on the sand, but now they saw him, standing there, still giddy from the shock, but smiling! . . . The surprise and astonishment of it all increased their enthusiasm.

"Oh! the brute!" they roared from the benches, not finding any better word with which to express their unbounded astonishment . . . "What a savage!"

Hats flew into the arena. Overwhelming rounds of applause ran like a torrent of hail from bench to bench, as the matador advanced through the arena, following the circle of the barriers, till he arrived opposite the presidential chair.

Then as Gallardo opened his arms to salute the president, the thundering ovation redoubled; all shouted, claiming the honors of the "maestria"\* for the matador. "He ought to be given the ear." "Never was the honor better deserved." "Sword thrusts like that are seldom seen," and the enthusiasm waxed even greater when one of the attendants of the Plaza presented him with a dark, hairy, bloody triangle; it was the tip of one of the beast's ears.

The third bull was already in the circus, and still the ovation to

\* Maestria—complete knowledge.

Gallardo continued, as if the audience had not recovered from its astonishment, and nothing that could possibly happen during the rest of the corrida could be of the slightest interest.

The other toreros, pale with professional jealousy, exerted themselves to attract the attention of the public, but the applause they gained sounded weak and timid after the outburst that had preceded it. The public seemed exhausted by their former excess of enthusiasm, and only paid absent-minded attention to the fresh events unfolding themselves in the arena.

Soon violent disputes arose between the rows of seats.

The supporters of the other matadors, who by this time had become calm and had recovered from the wave of enthusiasm which had mastered them in common with everyone else, began to justify their former spontaneous outburst by criticizing Gallardo.

'Very brave—very daring,' 'suicidal,' but that was not art. On the other hand the worshippers of the idol, who were even more vehement and brutal and who admired his audacity from innate sympathy, were rabid with the rage of zealots who hear doubts cast on the miracles of their own particular saint.

Various minor incidents which caused commotion amidst the benches also distracted the attention of the audience. Suddenly there was a commotion in some section of the amphitheater. Everybody stood up, turning their backs on the arena, and arms and sticks were flung above the sea of heads. The rest of the audience forgot the arena and concentrated their attention on the fracas and the large numbers painted on the walls of the inside barrier, which distinguished the blocks of seats.

'A fight in Number 3!' they yelled joyfully. 'Now there's a row in Number 5!'

Finally the whole audience caught the contagion, got excited, and stood up, each trying to look over his neighbor's head, but all they were able to see was the slow ascent of the police, who pushed a way for themselves from bench to bench and finally reached the group where the disturbance was going on.

'Sit down!' shouted the more peaceable, who were prevented from seeing the arena, where the toreros were continuing their work.

The general tumult was gradually calmed and the rows of heads round the circular line of benches resumed their previous regularity during the progress of the corrida. But the audience seemed to have its nerves overstrained and gave vent to its feelings by uncalled-for animosity or contemptuous silence toward certain of the fighters.

The crowd, exhausted by its previous outburst of emotion, re-

garded all that followed as insipid and so diverted its boredom by eating and drinking. The refreshment sellers of the Plaza walked round between the barriers, throwing up the articles asked for with marvelous dexterity. Oranges flew like golden balls up to the very highest benches, in a straight line from the hands of the seller to that of the buyer, as if drawn by a thread. Bottles of aerated drinks were opened, and the golden wine of Andalusia shone in the glasses.

Soon a current of curiosity ran round the seats. Fuentes was going to fix banderillas in his bull, and everyone expected something extraordinarily dexterous and graceful. He advanced alone into the midst of the Plaza, with the banderillas in his hand, quiet and self-possessed, moving slowly, as if he were beginning some dance. The bull followed his movements with anxious eyes, astonished to see this man alone in front of him, after the previous hurly-burly of outspread cloaks, cruel pikes sticking into his neck and horns which placed themselves in front of his horns, as if offering the ways to his attack.

The man hypnotized the beast, approaching so close as even to touch his pole with the banderillas. Then with short trippings he ran away, pursued by the bull, which followed him as that he penetrated to the opposite end of the Plaza. The animal seemed convinced by the fighter and obeyed his every movement until at last, thinking the game had lasted long enough, the man opened his arms, and a dart in either hand drew up his graceful slim figure on to pikes, and advancing toward the bull with majestic tranquillity, fixed the colored darts in the neck of the surprised animal.

Three times he performed this feat amid the acclamations of the audience. Those who thought themselves connoisseurs now had their revenge for the explosion of admiration provoked by Gallardo. This was what a true toreador should be! This was real art!

Gallardo stood by the barrier, wiping the sweat from his face with a towel handed to him by Garibato. Afterward he drank some water and turned his back on the circus, so as not to see the paces of his rival. Outside the Plaza he esteemed his rivals with the fraternal established by danger, but once they tried the arena they all became his enemies and their triumphs pained him like wounds. The new enthusiasm for Fuentes which obscured his own great triumphs seemed to him like robbery. On the appearance of the new bull, which was his, he leaped into the arena, burning to astonish everybody by his prowess.

If a picador fell he spread his cloak and drew the bull to the other end of the arena, bewildering it with a succession of cloak play that

left the beast motionless. Then Gallardo would touch it on the muzzle with one foot, or would take off his montero and lay it between the animal's horns. Again and again he took advantage of its stupefaction and exposed his stomach in an audacious challenge, or knelt close to it as though about to lie down beneath its nose.

Under their breath the old aficionados muttered "Monkey tricks!" "Buffooneries that would not have been tolerated in former days!" . . . But amidst the general shouts of approval they were obliged to keep their opinion to themselves.

When the signal for the *banderillas* was given, the audience was amazed to see Gallardo take the darts from *El Nacional* and advance with them toward the bull. There was a shout of protest. "He with the *banderillas*!" . . . They all knew his failing in that respect. *Banderilla* play was only for those who had risen in their career step by step, who before arriving at being matadors had been *banderilleros* for many years by the side of their masters, and Gallardo had begun at the other end, killing bulls from the time he first began in the Plaza.

"No! No!" shouted the crowd.

Doctor Ruiz yelled and thumped inside the barrier.

"Leave that alone, lad! You know well enough what is wanted. Kill!"

But Gallardo despised his audience and was deaf to its advice when his daring impulses came over him. In the midst of the din he went straight up to the bull, and before it moved—Zas! he stuck in the *banderillas*. The pair were out of place and badly driven in.\* One of them fell out with the animal's start of surprise, but this did not signify. With the tolerance that a crowd always has for its idol, excusing, even justifying, his shortcomings, the spectators watched this daring act smilingly. Gallardo, rendered still more audacious, took a second pair of *banderillas* and stuck them in, regardless of the warnings of those who feared for his life. This feat he repeated a third time, badly, but with such dash that what would have provoked hisses for another produced only explosions of admiration for him. "What a man! How luck helped that fearless man!"

The bull carried four *banderillas* instead of six, and those were so feebly planted that it scarcely seemed to feel the discomfort.

"He is still fresh!" † shouted the aficionados from the benches,

The *banderillas* ought to be evenly and symmetrically placed in pairs—three pairs is the proper complement.

† Term applied to a bull which, after much punishment, is still plucky and strong.

alluding to the bull, while Gallardo, with his montero on his head, grasping rapier and muleta in his hands, advanced toward him, proud and calm, trusting to his lucky star.

"Out—all of you!" he cried again.

He turned his head, feeling that someone was remaining close to him regardless of his orders. It was Fuentes, a few steps behind him, who had followed him with his cloak on his arm, pretending not to have heard but ready to rush to his assistance, as if he foresaw some accident.

"Leave me, Antonio," said Gallardo half angrily, and yet respectfully, as if he were speaking to an elder brother.

His manner was such that Fuentes shrugged his shoulders, disclaiming all responsibility. Turning his back, he moved slowly away, certain that he would be suddenly required.

Gallardo spread his cloth on the very head of the wild beast, which at once attacked it. A pass. "Olé!" roared the enthusiasts. The animal turned suddenly, throwing itself again on the torero with a violent toss of its head that tore the muleta out of his hand. Finding himself disarmed and attacked he was obliged to run for the barrier, but at this instant Fuentes' cloak diverted the animal's charge. Gallardo, who guessed during his flight the cause of the bull's sudden distraction, did not leap the barrier but sat on the step and there remained some moments watching his enemy a few paces off. His flight ended in applause of this display of calmness.

He recovered his muleta and rapier, carefully rearranged the red cloth, and once again placed himself in front of the brute's head, but this time not so calmly. The lust of slaughter dominated him, an intense desire to kill as soon as possible the animal which had forced him to fly in the sight of thousands of admirers.

He scarcely moved a step. Thinking that the decisive moment had come he squared himself, the muleta low, and the pommel of the rapier raised to his eyes.

Again the audience protested, fearing for his life.

"Don't strike! Stop!" . . . "O-o-oh!"

An exclamation of horror shook the whole Plaza, a spasm which made all rise to their feet, their eyes starting, whilst the women hid their faces, or convulsively clutched at the arm nearest them.

As the matador struck, the sword glanced on a bone. This mischance retarded his escape, and, caught by one of the horns, he was hooked up by the middle of his body, and, despite his weight and strength of muscle, this well-built man was lifted, was twirled about on its point like a helpless dummy until the powerful beast with a toss



of its head sent him flying several yards away. The torero fell with a thump on the sand with his limbs spread wide apart, just like a frog dressed up in silk and gold

"It's killed him!" "He is gored in the stomach!" they yelled from the seats

But Gallardo picked himself up from among the medley of cloaks and men which rushed to his rescue. With a smile he passed his hands over his body and then shrugged his shoulders to show he was not hurt. Nothing but the force of the blow and a sash in rags. The horn had only torn the strong silk belt.

He turned to pick up his "killing weapons." None of the spectators sat down, as they guessed that the next encounter would be brief and terrible. Gallardo advanced toward the bull with a reckless excitement, as if he discredited the powers of its horns now he had emerged unhurt. He was determined to kill or to die. There must be neither delay nor precautions. It must be either the bull or himself! He saw everything red just as if his eyes were bloodshot, and he only heard like a distant sound from the other world, the shouts of the people, who implored him to keep calm.

He only made two passes with the help of a cloak which lay near him, and then suddenly, quick as thought, like a spring released from its catch he threw himself on the bull, planting a thrust, as his admirers said, "like lightning." He thrust his arm in so far that as he drew back from between the horns one of them grazed him, sending him staggering several steps. But he kept his feet, and the bull, after a mad rush, fell at the opposite side of the Plaza, with its legs doubled beneath it and its poll touching the sand, until the "puntilero"\* came to give the final dagger thrust.

The crowd seemed to go off its head with delight. A splendid corrido! All were surfeited with excitement. "That man Gallardo didn't steal their cash, he paid back their entrance money with interest." The aficionados would have enough to keep them talking for three days at their evening meetings in the cafe. What a brave fellow! What a savage! And the most enthusiastic looked all around them in a fever of pugnacity to find anyone that disagreed with them.

"He's the finest matador in the world! . . . If anyone dares to deny it, I'm here, ready for him."

The rest of the corrida scarcely attracted any attention. It all seemed insipid and colorless after Gallardo's great feats.

When the last bull fell in the arena, a swarm of boys, low-class

\* A man who finishes the bull with a dagger thrust

hangers-on, and bull-ring apprentices invaded the circus. They surrounded Gallardo and escorted him in his progress from the president's chair to the door of exit. They pressed round him, anxious to shake his hands, or even to touch his clothes, till finally the wildest spirits, regardless of the blows of El Nacional and the other banderilleros, seized the maestro by the legs, and hoisting him on their shoulders, carried him in triumph round the circus and galleries as far as the outbuildings of the Plaza.

Gallardo, raising his montero, saluted the groups who cheered his progress. With his gorgeous cape around him he let himself be carried like a god, erect and motionless, above the sea of Cordovan hats and Madrid caps, whence issued enthusiastic rounds of cheers.

When he was seated in his carriage, passing down the Calle de Alcalá, hailed by the crowds who had not seen the corrida but who had already heard of his triumphs, a smile of pride, of delight in his own strength, illuminated his face perspiring and pale with excitement.

El Nacional, still anxious about his Master's accident and terrible fall, asked if he was in pain, and whether Doctor Ruiz should be summoned.

"No, it was only a caress, nothing more. . . . The bull that can kill me is not born yet."

But as though, in the midst of his pride some remembrance of his former weakness had surged up, and he thought he saw a sarcastic gleam in El Nacional's eye, he added:

"Those feelings come over me before I go to the Plaza. . . . Something like women's fancies. You are not far wrong, Sebastian. What's your saying? . . . 'God or Nature'; that's it. Neither God or Nature meddles with bullfighting affairs. Everyone comes out of it as best he can, by his own skill or his own courage, there is no protection to be had from either earth or heaven. . . . You have talents, Sebastian; you ought to have studied for a profession."

In the optimism of his triumph he regarded the banderillero as a sage, quite forgetting the laughter with which at other times he had always greeted his very involved reasonings.

On arriving at his lodging he found a crowd of admirers in the lobby waiting to embrace him. His exploits,\* to judge from their hyperbolic language, had become quite different, so much did their conversation exaggerate and distort them, even during the short drive from the Plaza to the hotel.

Upstairs he found his room full of friends. Gentlemen who called him "tu" and who imitated the rustic speech of the peasantry,

shepherds, herdsmen, and such like, slapping him on the back and saying, "You were splendid . . . absolutely first class."

Gallardo freed himself from this warm reception and went out into the passage with Garabato.

"Go and send off the telegram home. You know—'Nothing new.'"

Garabato excused himself, he wished to help his master to undress. The hotel people would undertake to send off the wire.

"No. I want you to do it. I will wait. . . . There's another telegram too that you must send. You know for whom it is—for that lady, for Doña Sol. . . . Also 'Nothing new.'"

# A BOWLER'S INNINGS

by E. W. HORNUNG

*If it were not so well told—and E. W. Hornung was always skilful and agreeable—"A Bowler's Innings" might be dismissed as too sentimental belonging to the high sugar-content school of "La Dame aux Camélias" and George Arliss. However, Hornung's talent for story telling gives this example distinct on all the way and the reader is his from the moment the narrator spots the blue and yellow signboard and leaves the road to investigate. He remains his because the cricket is so good—Hornung was himself a cricketer. In case you may have forgotten the basic 'rightness' of Raffles, Hornung's most famous character is made clear from the start for the reader is told that the amateur crackman is a devoted and able cricketer. Played for the Gentlemen in fact.*

I WAS IN SEARCH of some quiet spot to work in over the Christmas holidays, and here under my handlebars was the very place—a sheltered hollow with a solitary house set close beside the frozen road. Transversely ran a Yorkshire beck, overfled with snow and on the opposite bank the pinched trees rose intricate and brittle and black against the setting sun. But what pleased me more was the blue signboard hanging immovable in the windless frost. And the yellow legend on the same, when I had back-pedalled down the hill, and was clear enough to read it, was to yield the keenest joy of all.

BLUE BELL INN  
RICHARD UNTHANK

Dick Unthank! The old Yorkshire bowler! The most popular player of his day! It must be the same, the name was uncommon and was not inn-keeping the last state of most professional cricketers? I had never

spoken to Unthank in my life; but I had kept his analysis when a small enthusiast, and had seen him bowl so often that the red good-humoured face, with the crafty hook-nose and the ginger moustache, was a very present vision as I entered the inn where I made sure of finding it. A cold deserted passage led me to a taproom as empty and as cold. No sign of Dick could I discover; but in the taproom I was joined by a sour-looking slattern with a grimy baby in her arms.

"Mrs. Unthank, I presume?"

"Yes, I'm Mrs. Unthank," said the woman, with a sigh which offended me. Her voice was as peevish as her face.

"Am I right in taking your husband to be the famous old cricketer, Dick Unthank?"

"I don't know, I'm sure; he's not that old."

"But he is the cricketer?"

"Ay: he used to play."

"Used to play!" I echoed with some warmth. "Only for the County, and the Players, and England itself!"

"So I've heard tell," returned Dick's wife indifferently, "it was before my time, you see."

"Is your husband at home?" cried I, out of patience with the woman.

"Ay; he's at home!" was the meaning reply.

"Busy?"

"I wish he was! No such luck; he's bad in bed"

Dick Unthank ill in bed! I thought of that brick-red countenance and of the arm of gnarled oak which could bowl all day on a batsman's wicket, and I felt sure it could be nothing serious. Meanwhile I was looking at the woman, who was either entirely ignorant or else wilfully unappreciative of her husband's fame, and I also felt that the least indisposition would become aggravated in such hands. I said that I should like to see Mr. Unthank, if I might, and if he would see me.

"Are you a friend of his?" enquired the wife.

"I have known him for years—on the cricket-field."

"Well, t' doctor said coompany was good for him; and dear knows I can't be with him all day, with his work to do as well as my own. If you step this way, I'll show you up. Mind your head as you come upstairs. It's the ricketiest old house iver I was in, an' no good for trade an' all; but Mr. Unthank took a fancy to it, and he wouldn't listen to me. I doubt he's sorry now. This is the room at t' top o' t' stairs. Oh, no, he won't be asleep. Well, Unthank, here's a gentleman come to see you."

We had entered a square, low room, with no carpet upon its lumpy floor, and very little furniture within its dingy walls. There was one

window, whose diamond panes scored the wintry glow across and across, and this was what first caught my eye. Then it rested on the fire, in which the coal had been allowed to cake until it gave out as little warmth as light. The bed was in the darkest corner of the room. I could make out little more than a confused mass of bedclothes, and, lying back upon the pillows, the head and shoulders of a man.

"He says he's known you for years," added Mrs. Unthank as I shut the door.

"Why, who can it be?" said a hollow voice from the corner. "Poke up the fire, missus, an' let's see each other."

"You won't know me, Mr. Unthank," I hastened to confess. "I have only seen you play, but you have given me many a happy hour, and I wanted to tell you so when I saw your name on the signboard. I am only sorry to find you like this. Nothing very serious, I hope?"

"Not it!" was the hoarse reply. "'Tis nobbut a cold I caught last spring, an' never properly throwed off. It serves me right for giving up the game! I'd have sweaten it off in half an hour at the nets. But I mean to give this up, an' get a school or club to coach next season; then I'll be myself again. That's better, missus! Now we can see to shake hands."

And he gave me the cunning member which had been a county's strength; but the Dick Unthank of old days was dead to me before I felt its slack and humid clasp. The man on the fire-lit bed seemed half Dick's size, the lusty arms were gone to skin and bone, the weather-beaten face shone whiter than the unclean pillow which was its frame. The large nose was wasted and unduly prominent, and a red stubble covered the sunken cheeks and the chin. Only the moustache was ruddy and unchanged; and it glistened with a baleful dew.

I was utterly amazed and shocked. How I looked I do not know, but Mrs. Unthank paused at the door before leaving us together.

"Ay," said she, "I thought you'd see a difference! He talks about playing next season, but he'll be lucky if he sees another. I doubt he isn't that long for this world!"

It was my first experience of the class which tells the truth to its sick and dying, and my blood was boiling; but Unthank smiled grimly as the door closed.

"Poor lass," said he, "it would be hard on her if there was owt in what she says. But trust a woman to see black, an' trust old Dick to put on flesh and muscle once he gets back into flannels. I never should ha' chucked it up; that's where I made a mistake. But spilt milk's spilt milk, and I'm right glad to see you, sir. So you've watched me bowl, have you? Not at my best, I'm afraid, sir, unless you're older than what I take you for." And Dick looked sorry for himself for the first time.

"On the contrary," said I, "you never did much better than the very first time I saw you play."

"When was that, sir?"

"Eighteen years ago last July."

"Eighteen year? Why, you must have been a little lad, sir?"

"I was twelve; but I knew my *Lillywhite* off by heart, and all that season I cut the matches out of the newspapers and pasted them in a book. I have it still."

"Mebbe it wasn't a first-class match you saw me come off in?"

"It was against the Gentlemen, at Lord's."

"Eighteen—year—ago. Hold on, sir! Did I take some wickets in t' second innings?"

"Seven for forty-three."

"An' made some runs an' all?"

"Thirty-two not out. It was the fastest thing I ever saw!"

Dick shook his head.

"It wasn't good cricket, sir," said he. "But then I niver was owt of a bat. It was a bowler's innings was that—a short life but a merry one; 'twas a bowler's wicket an' all, I mind, an' I was in a hurry to make use of it. Ay, ay, I remember it now as if it was yesterday."

"So do I; it was my first sight of Lord's."

"Did you see the hall that took W. G.?"

"I did. It nearly made me cry! It was my first sight of W. G. also!"

"She came back nine inches," said the old bowler in a solemn voice, "Mr. Grace, he said eighteen inches, and the *Sportsman* it said six; but it wasn't less than nine, as sure as I lie here. Ay, t' wicket might ha' been made for me that day, there's no ground to bowl on like Lord's on the mend. I got Mr. Lucas too— and there wasn't a finer batsman living at the time—an' Mr. Webbe was caught off me at cover. Them were the days, an' no mistake, an' yon day was one of my very best; it does me good to think about it. I may never play first-class cricket again, but mebbe I'll coach them as will."

The fire had died down again: the wintry glow was blotted out by early night, and once more the old professional's face was invisible in the darkened room. I say "old" because he had been very long before the public, but he was little worse than forty in mere years, and now in the dark it was difficult to believe that his cricket days were altogether over. His voice was fuller and heartier than when he greeted me, and if the belief that one will recover be half the battle against sickness then Dick Unthank was already half-way to victory. But his gaunt face haunted me, and I was wondering whether such wasted limbs could ever

fill out again, when there came a beating of hoofs like drumsticks on the frozen road, and wheels stopped beneath the window.

"That's the doctor," grumbled Dick. "I'm sure I don't know what he wants to come every day for. Sit still, sir, sit still."

"No; I must go. But I shall want something to eat, and a bed for the night at least, and I shall come up later without fail."

Already there were steps on the rickety stairs; and I made my escape as Mrs. Unthank, with a streaming candle, ushered in a tall old gentleman in a greatcoat and creaking boots. I was detaching my impedimenta from the bicycle when the creaking boots came down again.

"I should like one word with you, sir," said the doctor. "I gather that you are thinking of putting up here, and it will be a real charity if you do. You have done my patient more good in half an hour than I have in the last month."

"Oh, as to that," said I, "it is a treat to me to meet an old cricketer like Dick Unthank, but I hardly think I can stay beyond to-morrow. I want a quiet place to do some work in, but I must be reasonably comfortable too; and, to be frank, I doubt the comfort here."

"You may well!" exclaimed the doctor, lowering his voice. "That woman is enough to scare anybody; yet for the money's sake she would look after you in a way, and with it she might make her husband more comfortable than he is. I may frighten you away myself by saying so, but it would be an untold relief to me to feel that there was one responsible and humane person in the house."

"Is he so very ill?"

"So very ill? Have you seen him and can you ask? He is in a galloping consumption."

"But he is so full of hope. Is there no hope for him?"

"Not the shadow of a chance! They are always sanguine. That is part of the disease."

"And how long do you give him?"

The doctor shrugged.

"It may be weeks, it may be days, it *might* be months," said he. "I can only say that in this weather and with such a nurse nothing would surprise me."

"That is enough for me," I replied. "I shall give the place a trial"

And I did.

Many nights I passed in a chamber as accessible to the four winds of heaven as to the companies of mice which broke each night's sleep into so many naps. Many days I lived well enough on new-laid eggs and



Yorkshire ham, and wrought at my book until for good or ill the stack of paper lay complete upon the table. And many a winter's evening I spent at Dick's bedside, chatting with him, listening to him, hearing a score of anecdotes to one that I can set down here, and admiring more and more the cheeriness and the charity of the dying man. In all our talks I cannot remember an unkind story or a word of spite, though Dick had contemporaries still in the county ranks, the thought of whom must have filled his soul with envy. Even his wife was all that was good in his eyes; in mine she was not actually bad, but merely useless, callous and indifferent from sheer want of intelligence and imagination.

In the early days I sent for my portmanteau, and had my old cricket scrap-book put into it. Dick's eyes glistened as he took up leaf after leaf. I had torn them out for his convenience, and for days they kept him amused while I was absent at my work. Towards the end I brought my work beside him, for he was weakening visibly, though unconsciously, and it was a new interest to his simple mind.

"I don't know how you do it, sir," said he one afternoon, as I gathered my papers together. "I've been watching you this half h-hour—your pen's hardly stopped—and it's all out of your own head! It beats an' bowls me, sir, does that. Dear knows how you do it."

"Well," I laughed, "and it's a puzzle to me how you pitch a ball just where you like and make it break either way at will. Dear knows how you do that!"

Dick shook his head.

"Sometimes you can't," said he reflectively; "sometimes you're off the spot altogether. I've heard you say you can't write some days; and some days a man can't bowl. Ay, you *could* write, and I *could* bowl, but they'd smack me to t' boundary over after over."

"And what I wrote I should tear up next morning."

He lay looking at the window. It was soft weather now, and a watery sun shone weakly into the room, slanting almost to the bed, so that a bleached and bony hand hung glistening in the rays. I knew that it was itching to hold a ball again—that Dick's spirit was in flannels—even before he continued:

"Now to-day's a day when you could bowl. I'm glad it isn't t' season: it'd be my day, would this, wi' a wet wicket drying from t' top. By gum, but you can do summat wi' a wicket like yon. The ground fairly bites, an' the ball'll come in wi' your arm, or break back or hang, just as it's told; it's the time a ball answers its helm, sir, is that! And it's a rum thing, but it'll drop where you ask it on a bowler's wicket; but on a good 'un it seems to know that they can make a half-volley of it 'most wherever it drops, so it loses heart and pitches all over the shop. Ay,

there's a deal o' human natur' in a treble-seam, sir; it don't like getting knocked about any more than we do."

So we would chat by the hour together, and the present was our favourite tense, as though his cricket days were not nearly over. Nor did I see any sense or kindness in convincing him that they were, and a little persuasion brought Mrs. Unthank to my way of thinking and acting in the matter. Clergymen, however, are bound by other considerations, and though Unthank was by no means an irreligious man, but had an open ear and mind for the manly young curate who came to see him from time to time, he did bitterly complain to me one evening when the curate was gone.

"No game's lost till it's won, sir, and t' parson has no right to shake his head till the umpire gives me out. I don't say I'm in for a long score—bowlers very seldom are, but I isn't going out just yet a bit. I'll get better set by-and-by, and you'll see me trouble the scorers yet."

It was easy to tell that Dick was proud of his metaphor, and it recurred continually in his talk. His disease was "the bowler," and each fit of coughing "a nasty one," but if he could only keep up his wicket till summer-time he felt confident of adding some years to his score. This confidence clung to him almost to the last. He would give up the inn and get back to Bramall Lane, and umpire for "t' owd team" as long as he had a leg to stand on.

I remember when he realized the truth.

In a corner of the best parlour, beneath an accumulation of old newspapers and the ruins of a glass shade, I found one day, when I had finished but was still polishing my book, a war-worn cricket-ball with a tarnished silver plate let into the bruised leather. The inscription on the plate announced that this was the actual ball with which Richard Unthank had taken nine Nottingham wickets (the tenth being run out) for a matter of fifty runs, at Bramall Lane, in his palmy days.

That was twenty years ago, but I knew from Dick that it remained the achievement of which he was proudest, and I took the ball upstairs to him after cleaning the silver plate as well as I could with soap and water.

His hot eyes glistened.

"Why, wherever did you find this, sir?" he cried, with the joy of a child in his shallow voice. "I'd forgot I had it. How canny it feels! Ay, ay, yon was the happiest day in all my life!"

And rapidly and excitedly he gave me full particulars, explaining how and why the wicket had suited him to a nicety, and how he had known before he finished an over that it was his day of days. Then he went through the Notts eleven, and told me with what ball and by what wile

he had captured this wicket after that. Only one of the nine had fallen more by luck than good bowling; that was when Dick atoned for a half-volley by holding a terrific return, and so won the match for Yorkshire by the narrow margin of three runs.

"It was my slow ball, and a bit too slow, I doubt, an' he runs out of his ground an' let drive. There was an almighty crack, and next thing I hears is a rush of air low down to the on. I goes for it wi'out seeing a thing, feels smack on my hand, an' there's the beautiful ball stuck in it that tight that nobbut gunpowder could ha' shifted her! She looked that sweet and peaceful sticking in my hand that what do you think I did? Took an' kissed her instead of chucking her up! You see, sir, I'd forgot that if I'd lost her we should ha' lost t' match instead o' winning, for she was a dead-sure boundary; when owd Tom tell'd me it made me feel that bad, I'd got to have a big drink or faint; an' I feel bad when I think of it yet."

In his excitement he had raised himself on his left elbow. The effort had relaxed his muscles, and the historic ball had slipped from his fingers and was rolling across the floor. I picked it up, and was about to return it to him, but Dick Unthank waved me back.

"Nay, nay," said he. "Give us a catch, sir. They're runnin'!"

So I tossed it gently into his outstretched hand, but the weak fingers closed too soon, and once more the ball rolled on the floor. Dick looked at me comically, yet with a spot of colour on either cheekbone, as he shook his head.

"I doubt I'm out of practice," he said. "Come, let's try again."

"I wouldn't, Dick."

"You wouldn't? What do you mean? Do you think I'm that bad I can't catch a cricket-ball—me that's played for All England in my day? Chuck her in again and I'll show you! Get to t' boundary at t'other side o' t' room!"

He was sitting bolt upright now, with both hands ready, and in his altered tone there was such umbrage that I could not cross him. So again I threw; but two such hands were no better than one; the ball fell through them into the bed; and Dick Unthank sat looking at me with death dawning in his eyes.

"It's the light," I said gruffly, for it was the finest day of the New Year, and even now the sun was glinting on the silver-mounted ball. "Who could make catches in a light like this?"

"No, sir," whispered Dick, "it's not the light. I see what it is. It's—it's what they call the beginning o' the end."

And he burst into tears. Yet was he sanguine even then, for the end was very near. It came that night.

# THE HEART OF A GOOF

by P. G. WODEHOUSE

(1923)

*Of the many top rung humorists who have contributed short stories to golf's extensive literature, no one has quite approached P. G. Wodehouse in capturing the full personality of the game—above all the sinister way it has of seizing the souls of otherwise sound citizens and turning their lives into a Hell Bunker on earth. He has written about golf in several dozen stories. In most of them—and this story is an example—the story are introduced by a short encounter on the clubhouse between some young golfer and The Oldest Member, a weather-beaten sage of the veranda who has seen it all many, many times before and is always orally warmed up to supply the appropriate chapter and verse.*

IT WAS a morning when all nature shouted "Fore!" The breeze, as it blew gently up from the valley, seemed to bring a message of hope and cheer, whispering of chip shots holed and brassies landing squarely on the meat. The fairway, as yet unscarred by the irons of a hundred dubs, smiled greenly up at the azure sky, and the sun, peeping above the trees, looked like a giant golf ball perfectly lofted by the mashie of some unseen god and about to drop dead by the pin of the eighteenth. It was the day of the opening of the course after the long winter, and a crowd of considerable dimensions had collected at the first tee. Plus fours gleamed in the sunshine and the air was charged with happy anticipation.

In all that gay throng there was but one sad face. It belonged to the man who was wagging his driver over the new ball perched on its little hill of sand. This man seemed careworn, hopeless. He gazed down the fairway, shifted his feet, wagged, gazed down the fairway again, shifted the dogs once more, and wagged afresh. He wagged as Hamlet might have wagged, moodily, irresolutely. Then, at last,

he swung, and, taking from his caddie the niblick which the intelligent lad had been holding in readiness from the moment when he had walked on to the tee, trudged wearily off to play his second.

The Oldest Member, who had been observing the scene with a benevolent eye from his favorite chair on the terrace, sighed.

"Poor Jenkinson," he said, "does not improve."

"No," agreed his companion, a young man with open features and a handicap of six. "And yet I happen to know that he has been taking lessons all the winter at one of those indoor places."

"Futile, quite futile," said the Sage with a shake of his snowy head. "There is no wizard living who could make that man go round in an average of sevens. I keep advising him to give up the game."

"You!" cried the young man, raising a shocked and startled face from the driver with which he was toying. "*You* told him to give up golf! Why I thought—"

"I understand and approve of your horror," said the Oldest Member, gently. "But you must bear in mind that Jenkinson's is not an ordinary case. You know and I know scores of men who have never broken a hundred and twenty in their lives, and yet contrive to be happy, useful members of society. However badly they may play, they are able to forget. But with Jenkinson it is different. He is not one of those who can take it or leave it alone. His only chance of happiness lies in complete abstinence. Jenkinson is a goof."

"A what?"

"A goof," repeated the Sage. "One of those unfortunate beings who have allowed this noblest of sports to get too great a grip upon them, who have permitted it to eat into their souls, like some malignant growth. The goof, you must understand, is not like you and me. He broods. He becomes morbid. His goofery unfits him for the battles of life. Jenkinson, for example, was once a man with a glowing future in the hay, corn, and feed business, but a constant stream of hooks, tops, and slices gradually made him so diffident and mistrustful of himself, that he let opportunity after opportunity slip, with the result that other, sterner, hay, corn, and feed merchants passed him in the race. Every time he had the chance to carry through some big deal in hay, or to execute some flashing coup in corn and feed, the fatal diffidence generated by a hundred rotten rounds would undo him. I understand his bankruptcy may be expected at any moment."

"My golly!" said the young man, deeply impressed. "I hope I

never become a goof. Do you mean to say there is really no cure except giving up the game?"

The Oldest Member was silent for a while.

"It is curious that you should have asked that question," he said at last, "for only this morning I was thinking of the one case in my experience where a goof was enabled to overcome his deplorable malady. It was owing to a girl, of course. The longer I live, the more I come to see that most things are. But you will, no doubt, wish to hear the story from the beginning."

The young man rose with the startled haste of some wild creature which, wandering through the undergrowth, perceives the trap in his path.

"I should love to," he mumbled, "only I shall be losing my place at the tee."

"The goof in question," said the Sage, attaching himself with quiet firmness to the youth's coat button, "was a man of about your age, by name Ferdinand Dibble. I knew him well. In fact, it was to me—"

"Some other time, eh?"

"It was to me," proceeded the Sage, placidly, "that he came for sympathy in the great crisis of his life, and I am not ashamed to say that when he had finished laying bare his soul to me there were tears in my eyes. My heart bled for the boy."

"I bet it did. But—"

The Oldest Member pushed him gently back into his seat.

"Golf," he said, "is the Great Mystery. Like some capricious goddess—"

The young man, who had been exhibiting symptoms of feverishness, appeared to become resigned. He sighed softly.

"Did you ever read *The Ancient Mariner*?" he said.

"Many years ago," said the Oldest Member. "Why do you ask?"

"Oh, I don't know," said the young man. "It just occurred to me."

Golf (resumed the Oldest Member) is the Great Mystery. Like some capricious goddess, it bestows its favors with what would appear an almost fatheaded lack of method and discrimination. On every side we see big two-fisted he-men floundering round in three figures, stopping every few minutes to let through little shrimps with knock-knees and hollow cheeks, who are tearing off snappy seventy-fours. Giants of finance have to accept a stroke per from their junior clerks. Men capable of governing empires fail to control

a small, white ball, which presents no difficulties whatever to others with one ounce more brain than a cuckoo clock. Mysterious, but there it is. There was no apparent reason why Ferdinand Dibble should not have been a competent golfer. He had strong wrists and a good eye. Nevertheless, the fact remains that he was a dub. And on a certain evening in June I realized that he was also a goof. I found it out quite suddenly as the result of a conversation which we had on this very terrace.

I was sitting here that evening thinking of this and that, when by the corner of the clubhouse I observed young Dibble in conversation with a girl in white. I could not see who she was, for her back was turned. Presently they parted and Ferdinand came slowly across to where I sat. His air was dejected. He had had the boots licked off him earlier in the afternoon by Jimmy Fothergill, and it was to this that I attributed his gloom. I was to find out in a few moments that I was partly but not entirely correct in this surmise. He took the next chair to mine, and for several minutes sat staring moodily down into the valley.

"I've just been talking to 'Barbara Medway,'" he said, suddenly breaking the silence.

"Indeed?" I said. "A delightful girl."

"She's going away for the summer to Marvis Bay."

"She will take the sunshine with her."

"You bet she will!" said Ferdinand Dibble, with extraordinary warmth, and there was another long silence.

Presently Ferdinand uttered a hollow groan.

"I love her, danimit!" he muttered brokenly. "Oh, golly, how I love her!"

I was not surprised at his making me the recipient of his confidences like this. Most of the young folk in the place brought their troubles to me sooner or later.

"And does she return your love?"

"I don't know. I haven't asked her."

"Why not? I should have thought the point not without its interest for you."

Ferdinand gnawed the handle of his putter distractedly.

"I haven't the nerve," he burst out at length. "I simply can't summon up the cold gall to ask a girl, least of all an angel like her, to marry me. You see, it's like this. Every time I work myself up to the point of having a dash at it, I go out and get trimmed by someone giving me a stroke a hole. Every time I feel I've mustered up enough pep to propose, I take ten on a bogey three. Every time

I think I'm in good midseason form for putting my fate to the test, to win or lose it all, something goes all blooey with my swing, and I slice into the rough at every tee. And then my self-confidence leaves me. I become nervous, tongue-tied, diffident. I wish to goodness I knew the man who invented this infernal game. I'd strangle him. But I suppose he's been dead for ages. Still, I could go and jump on his grave."

It was at this point that I understood all, and the heart within me sank like lead. The truth was out. Ferdinand Dibble was a goof.

"Come, come, my boy," I said, though feeling the uselessness of any words. "Master this weakness."

"I can't."

"Try!"

"I have tried."

He gnawed his putter again.

"She was asking me just now if I couldn't manage to come to Marvis Bay, too," he said

"That surely is encouraging? It suggests that she is not entirely indifferent to your society."

"Yes, but what's the use? Do you know," a gleam coming into his eyes for a moment, "I have a feeling that if I could ever beat some really fairly good player—just once—I could bring the thing off." The gleam faded. "But what chance is there of that?"

It was a question which I did not care to answer. I merely patted his shoulder sympathetically, and after a little while he left me and walked away. I was still sitting there, thinking over his hard case, when Barbara Medway came out of the clubhouse.

She, too, seemed grave and preoccupied, as if there was something on her mind. She took the chair which Ferdinand had vacated and sighed wearily.

"Have you ever felt," she asked, "that you would like to hang a man on the head with something hard and heavy? With knobs on?"

I said I had sometimes experienced such a desire and asked if she had any particular man in mind. She seemed to hesitate for a moment before replying, then, apparently, made up her mind to confide in me. My advanced years carry with them certain pleasant compensations, one of which is that nice girls often confide in me. I frequently find myself enrolled as a father-confessor on, the most intimate matters by beautiful creatures from whom many a younger man would give his eyeteeth to get a friendly word. Besides, I had known Barbara since she was a child. Frequently—though not re-



cently—I had given her her evening bath. These things form a bond.

"Why are men such chumps?" she exclaimed.

"You still have not told me who it is that has caused these harsh words. Do I know him?"

"Of course you do. You've just been talking to him."

"Ferdinand Dibble? But why should you wish to bang Ferdinand Dibble on the head with something hard and heavy with knobs on?"

"Because he's such a goop."

"You mean a goof?" I queried, wondering how she could have penetrated the unhappy man's secret.

"No, a goop. A goop is a man who's in love with a girl and won't tell her so. I am as certain as I am of anything that Ferdinand is fond of me."

"Your instinct is unerring. He has just been confiding in me on that very point."

"Well, why doesn't he confide in *me*, the poor fish?" cried the high-spirited girl, petulantly flicking a pebble at a passing grasshopper. "I can't be expected to fling myself into his arms unless he gives some sort of a hint that he's ready to catch me."

"Would it help if I were to repeat to him the substance of this conversation of ours?"

"If you breathe a word of it, I'll never speak to you again," she cried. "I'd rather die an awful death than have any man think I wanted him so badly that I had to send relays of messengers begging him to marry me."

I saw her point.

"Then I fear," I said, gravely, "that there is nothing to be done. One can only wait and hope. It may be that in the years to come Ferdinand Dibble will acquire a nice lissom, wristy swing, with the head kept rigid and the right leg firmly braced and—"

"What are you talking about?"

"I was toying with the hope that some sunny day Ferdinand Dibble would cease to be a goof."

"You mean a goop?"

"No, a goof. A goof is a man who—" And I went on to explain the peculiar psychological difficulties which lay in the way of any declaration of affection on Ferdinand's part.

"But I never heard of anything so ridiculous in my life," she ejaculated. "Do you mean to say that he is waiting till he is good at golf before he asks me to marry him?"

"It is not quite so simple as that," I said sadly. "Many bad golfers marry, feeling that a wife's loving solicitude may improve their game."

But they ate rugged, thick-skinned men, not sensitive and introspective, like Ferdinand. Ferdinand has allowed himself to become morbid. It is one of the chief merits of golf that nonsuccess at the game induces a certain amount of decent humility, which keeps a man from plumbing himself too much on any petty triumphs he may achieve in other walks of life; but in all things there is a happy mean, and with Ferdinand this humility has gone too far. It has taken all the spirit out of him. He feels crushed and worthless. He is grateful to caddies when they accept a tip instead of drawing themselves up to their full height and flinging the money in his face."

"Then do you mean that things have got to go on like this forever?"

I thought for a moment.

"It is a pity," I said, "that you could not have induced Ferdinand to go to Marvis Bay for a month or two."

"Why?"

"Because it seems to me, thinking the thing over, that it is just possible that Marvis Bay might cure him. At the hotel there he would find collected a mob of golfers—I used the term in its broadest sense, to embrace the paralytics and the men who play left-handed—whom even he would be able to beat. When I was last at Marvis Bay, the hotel links were a sort of Sargasso Sea into which had drifted all the pitiful flotsam and jetsam of golf. I have seen things done on that course at which I shuddered and averted my eyes—and I am not a weak man. If Ferdinand can polish up his game so as to go round in a fairly steady hundred and five, I fancy there is hope. But I understand he is not going to Marvis Bay."

"Oh yes, he is," said the girl.

"Indeed! He did not tell me that when we were talking just now."

"He didn't know it then. He will when I have had a few words with him."

And she walked with firm steps back into the clubhouse.

It has been well said that there are many kinds of golf, beginning at the top with the golf of professionals and the best amateurs and working down through the golf of ossified men to that of Scotch university professors. Until recently this last was looked upon as the lowest possible depth; but nowadays, with the growing popularity of summer hotels, we are able to add a brand still lower, the golf you find at places like Marvis Bay.

To Ferdinand Dibble, coming from a club where the standard of play was rather unusually high, Marvis Bay was a revelation, and

for some days after his arrival there he went about dazed, like a man who cannot believe it is really true. To go out on the links at this summer resort was like entering a new world. The hotel was full of stout, middle-aged men, who, after a misspent youth devoted to making money, had taken to a game at which real proficiency can only be acquired by those who start playing in their cradles and keep their weight down. Out on the course each morning you could see representatives of every nightmare style that was ever invented. There was the man who seemed to be attempting to deceive his ball and lull it into a false security by looking away from it and then making a lightning slash in the apparent hope of catching it off its guard. There was the man who wielded his midiron like one killing snakes. There was the man who addressed his ball as if he were stroking a cat, the man who drove as if he were cracking a whip, the man who brooded over each shot like one whose heart is bowed down by bad news from home, and the man who scooped with his mashie as if he were ladling soup. By the end of the first week Ferdinand Dibble was the acknowledged champion of the place. He had gone through the entire menagerie like a bullet through a cream puff.

First, scarcely daring to consider the possibility of success, he had taken on the man who tried to catch his ball off its guard and had beaten him five up and four to play. Then, with gradually growing confidence, he tackled in turn the Cat Stroker, the Whip Cracker, the Heart Bowed Down, and the Soup Scooper and walked all over their faces with spiked shoes. And as these were the leading local amateurs, whose prowess the octogenarians and the men who went round in Bath chairs vainly strove to emulate, Ferdinand Dibble was faced on the eighth morning of his visit by the startling fact that he had no more worlds to conquer. He was monarch of all he surveyed and, what is more, had won his first trophy, the prize in the great medal-play handicap tournament, in which he had nosed in ahead of the field by two strokes, edging out his nearest rival, a venerable old gentleman, by means of a brilliant and unexpected four on the last hole. The prize was a handsome pewter mug, about the size of the old oaken bucket, and Ferdinand used to go to his room immediately after dinner to croon over it like a mother over her child.

You are wondering, no doubt, why, in these circumstances, he did not take advantage of the new spirit of exhilarated pride which had replaced his old humility and instantly propose to Barbara Medway. I will tell you. He did not propose to Barbara because

Barbara was not there. At the last moment she had been detained at home to nurse a sick parent and had been compelled to postpone her visit for a couple of weeks. He could, no doubt, have proposed in one of the daily letters which he wrote to her, but somehow, once he started writing, he found that he used up so much space describing his best shots on the links that day that it was difficult to squeeze in a declaration of undying passion. After all, you can hardly cram that sort of thing into a postscript.

He decided, therefore, to wait till she arrived and meanwhile pursued his conquering course. The longer he waited the better, in one way, for every morning and afternoon that passed was adding new layers to his self-esteem. Day by day in every way he grew chestier and chestier.

Meanwhile, however, dark clouds were gathering. Sullen mutterings were to be heard in corners of the hotel lounge, and the spirit of revolt was abroad. For Ferdinand's chestiness had not escaped the notice of his defeated rivals. There is nobody so chesty as a normally unchesty man who suddenly becomes chesty, and I am sorry to say that the chestiness which had come to Ferdinand was the aggressive type of chestiness which breeds enemies. He had developed a habit of holding the game up in order to give his opponent advice. The Whip Cracker had not forgiven, and never would forgive, his well-meant but galling criticism of his backswing. The Scooper, who had always scooped since the day when, at the age of sixty-four, he subscribed to the Correspondence Course which was to teach him golf in twelve lessons by mail, resented being told by a snip of a boy that the mashie stroke should be a smooth, unhurried swing. The Snake Killer— But I need not weary you with a detailed recital of these men's grievances; it is enough to say that they all had it in for Ferdinand, and one night, after dinner, they met in the lounge to decide what was to be done about it.

A nasty spirit was displayed by all.

"A mere lad telling me how to use my mashie!" growled the Scooper. "Smooth and unhurried my left eyeball! I get it up, don't I? Well, what more do you want?"

"I keep telling him that mine is the old, full St. Andrew swing," muttered the Whip Cracker, between set teeth, "but he won't listen to me."

"He ought to be taken down a peg or two," hissed the Snake Killer. It is not easy to hiss a sentence without a single "s" in it, and the fact that he succeeded in doing so shows to what a pitch

of emotion the man had been goaded by Ferdinand's maddening air of superiority.

"Yes, but what can we do?" queried an octogenarian, when this last remark had been passed on to him down his ear trumpet.

"That's the trouble," sighed the Scooper. "What, can we do?" And there was a sorrowful shaking of heads.

"I know!" exclaimed the Cat Stroker, who had not hitherto spoken. He was a lawyer, and a man of subtle and sinister mind. "I have it! There's a boy in my office—young Parsloe—who could beat this man Dibble hollow. I'll wire him to come down here and we'll spring him on this fellow and knock some of the conceit out of him."

There was a chorus of approval.

"But are you sure he can beat him?" asked the Snake Killer, anxiously. "It would never do to make a mistake."

"Of course I'm sure," said the Cat Stroker. "George Parsloe once went round in ninety-four."

"Many changes there have been since ninety-four," said the octogenarian, nodding sagely. "Ah, many, many changes. None of these motorcars then, tearing about and killing—"

Kindly hands led him off to have an egg-and-milk and the remaining conspirators returned to the point at issue with bent brows.

"Ninety-four?" said the Scooper, incredulously. "Do you mean counting every stroke?"

"Counting every stroke."

"Not conceding himself any putts?"

"Not one."

"Wire him to come at once," said the meeting with one voice.

That night the Cat Stroker approached Ferdinand, smooth, subtle, lawyerlike.

"Oh, Dibble," he said, "just the man I wanted to see. Dibble, there's a young friend of mine coming down here who goes in for golf a little. George Parsloe is his name. I was wondering if you could spare time to give him a game. He is just a novice, you know."

"I shall be delighted to play a round with him," said Ferdinand, kindly.

"He might pick up a pointer or two from watching you," said the Cat Stroker.

"True, true," said Ferdinand.

"Then I'll introduce you when he shows up."

"Delighted," said Ferdinand.

• He was in excellent humor that night, for he had had a letter from Barbara saying that she was arriving on the next day but one.

It was Ferdinand's healthy custom of a morning to get up in good time and take a dip in the sea before breakfast. On the morning of the day of Barbara's arrival, he arose, as usual, donned his flannels, took a good look at the cup, and started out. It was a fine, fresh morning, and he glowed both externally and internally. As he crossed the links, for the nearest route to the water was through the fairway of the seventh, he was whistling happily and rehearsing in his mind the opening sentences of his proposal. For it was his firm resolve that night after dinner to ask Barbara to marry him. He was proceeding over the smooth turf without a care in the world, when there was a sudden cry of "Fore!" and the next moment a golf ball, missing him by inches, sailed up the fairway and came to a rest fifty yards from where he stood. He looked round and observed a figure coming toward him from the tee.

The distance from the tee was fully a hundred and thirty yards. Add fifty to that, and you have a hundred and eighty yards. No such drive had been made on the Marvis Bay links since their foundation, and such is the generous spirit of the true golfer that Ferdinand's first emotion, after the not inexcusable spasm of panic caused by the hum of the ball past his ear was one of cordial admiration. By some kindly miracle, he supposed, one of his hotel acquaintances had been permitted for once in his life to time a drive right. It was only when the other man came up that there began to steal over him a sickening apprehension. The faces of all those who hewed divots on the hotel course were familiar to him, and the fact that this fellow was a stranger seemed to point with dreadful certainty to his being the man he had agreed to play.

"Sorry," said the man. He was a tall, strikingly handsome youth, with brown eyes and a dark mustache.

"Oh, that's all right," said Ferdinand. "Er—do you always drive like that?"

"Well, I generally get a bit longer ball, but I'm off my drive this morning. It's lucky I came out and got this practice. I'm playing a match tomorrow with a fellow named Dibble, who's a local champion, or something."

"Me," said Ferdinand, humbly.

"Eh? Oh, you?" Mr. Parsloe eyed him appraisingly. "Well, may the best man win."

As this was precisely what Ferdinand was afraid was going to happen, he nodded in a sickly manner and tottered off to his bath. The magic had gone out of the morning. The sun still shone, but in a silly, feeble way; and a cold and depressing wind had sprung up. For Ferdinand's inferiority complex, which had seemed cured forever, was back again, doing business at the old stand.

How sad it is in this life that the moment to which we have looked forward with the most glowing anticipation so often turns out on arrival, flat, cold, and disappointing. For ten days Barbara Medway had been living for that meeting with Ferdinand, when, getting out of the train, she would see him popping about on the horizon with the love light sparkling in his eyes and words of devotion trembling on his lips. The poor girl never doubted for an instant that he would unleash his pent-up emotions inside the first five minutes, and her only worry was lest he should give an embarrassing publicity to the sacred scene by falling on his knees on the station platform.

"Well, here I am at last," she cried gaily.

"Hullo!" said Ferdinand, with a twisted smile.

The girl looked at him, chilled. How could she know that his peculiar manner was due entirely to the severe attack of cold feet resultant upon his meeting with George Parsloe that morning? The interpretation which she placed upon it was that he was not glad to see her. If he had behaved like this before, she would, of course, have put it down to ingrowing goofery, but now she had his written statements to prove that for the last ten days his golf had been one long series of triumphs.

"I got your letters," she said, persevering bravely.

"I thought you would," said Ferdinand, absently.

"You seem to have been doing wonders."

"Yes."

There was a silence.

"Have a nice journey?" said Ferdinand.

"Very," said Barbara.

She spoke coldly, for she was madder than a wet hen. She saw it all now. In the ten days since they had parted, his love, she realized, had waned. Some other girl, met in the romantic surroundings of this picturesque resort, had supplanted her in his affections. She knew how quickly Cupid gets off the mark at a summer hotel, and for an instant she blamed herself for ever having been so ivory-skulled as to let him come to this place alone. Then regret was swallowed up in

wrath, and she became so glacial that Ferdinand, when on the point of telling her the secret of his gloom, retired into his shell and conversation during the drive to the hotel never soared above a certain level. Ferdinand said the sunshine was nice and Barbara said yes, it was nice, and Ferdinand said it looked pretty on the water, and Barbara said yes, it did look pretty on the water, and Ferdinand said he hoped it was not going to rain, and Barbara said yes, it would be a pity if it rained. And then there was another lengthy silence.

"How is my uncle?" asked Barbara at last.

I omitted to mention that the individual to whom I have referred as the Cat Stroker was Barbara's mother's brother, and her host at Marvis Bay.

"Your uncle?"

"His name is Tuttle. Have you met him?"

"Oh yes. I've seen a good deal of him. He has got a friend staying with him," said Ferdinand, his mind returning to the matter nearest his heart. "A fellow named Parsloe."

"Oh, is George Parsloe here? How jolly!"

"Do you know him?" barked Ferdinand, hollowly. He would not have supposed that anything could have added to his existing depression, but he was conscious now of having slipped a few rungs farther down the ladder of gloom. There had been a horribly joyful ring in her voice. Ah, well, he reflected morosely, how like life it all was! We never know what the morrow may bring forth. We strike a good patch and are beginning to think pretty well of ourselves, and along comes a George Parsloe.

"Of course I do," said Barbara. "Why, there he is."

The cab had drawn up at the door of the hotel, and on the porch George Parsloe was airing his graceful person. To Ferdinand's fevered eye he looked like a Greek god, and his inferiority complex began to exhibit symptoms of elephantiasis. How could he compete at love or golf with a fellow who looked as if he had stepped out of the movies and considered himself off his drive when he did a hundred and eighty yards?

"Geor-gee!" cried Barbara, blithely. "Hullo, George!"

"Why, hullo, Barbara!"

They fell into pleasant conversation, while Ferdinand hung miserably about in the office. And presently, feeling that his society was not essential to their happiness, he slunk away.

George Parsloe dined at the Cat Stroker's table that night, and it was with George Parsloe that Barbara roamed in the moonlight after dinner. Ferdinand, after a profitless hour at the billiard table, went



early to his room. But not even the rays of the moon, glinting on his cup, could soothe the fever in his soul. He practiced putting somberly into his tooth glass for a while; then, going to bed, fell at last into a troubled sleep.

Barbara slept late the next morning and breakfasted in her room. Coming down toward noon, she found a strange emptiness in the hotel. It was her experience of summer hotels that a really fine day like this one was the cue for half the inhabitants to collect in the lounge, shut all the windows, and talk about conditions in the jute industry. To her surprise, though the sun was streaming down from a cloudless sky, the only occupant of the lounge was the octogenarian with the ear trumpet. She observed that he was chuckling to himself in a senile manner.

"Good morning," she said, politely, for she had made his acquaintance on the previous evening.

"Hey?" said the octogenarian, suspending his chuckling and getting his trumpet into position.

"I said 'Good mornin'g!'" roared Barbara into the receiver.

"Hey?"

"Good morning!"

"Ah! Yes, it's a very fine morning, a very fine morning. If it wasn't for missing my bun and glass of milk at twelve sharp," said the octogenarian, "I'd be down on the links. That's where I'd be, down on the links. If it wasn't for missing my bun and glass of milk."

This refreshment arriving at this moment he dismantled the radio outfit and began to restore his tissues.

"Watching the match," he explained, pausing for a moment in his bun-mangling.

"What match?"

The octogenarian sipped his milk.

"What match?" repeated Barbara.

"Hey?"

"What match?"

The octogenarian began to chuckle again and nearly swallowed a crumb the wrong way.

"Take some of the conceit out of him," he gurgled.

"Out of who?" asked Barbara, knowing perfectly well that she should have said "whom."

"Yes," said the octogenarian.

"Who is conceited?"

"Ah! This young fellow, Dibblè. Very conceited. I saw it in his eye

from the first, but nobody would listen to me. Mark my words, I said, that boy needs taking down a peg or two. Well, he's going to be this morning. Your uncle wired to young Parsloe to come down, and he's arranged a match between them. Dibble—" Here the octogenarian choked again and had to rinse himself out with milk, "Dibble doesn't know that Parsloe once went round in ninety-four!"

"What?"

Everything seemed to go black to Barbara. Through a murky mist she appeared to be looking at a Negro octogenarian, sipping ink. Then her eyes cleared, and she found herself clutching for support at the back of the chair. She understood now. She realized why Ferdinand had been so distraught, and her whole heart went out to him in a spasm of maternal pity. How she had wronged him!

"Take some of the conceit out of him," the octogenarian was mumbling, and Barbara felt a sudden sharp loathing for the old man. For two pins she could have dropped a beetle in his milk. Then the need for action roused her. What action? She did not know. All she knew was that she must act.

"Oh!" she cried.

"Hey?" said the octogenarian, bringing his trumpet to the ready.

But Barbara had gone.

It was not far to the links, and Barbara covered the distance on flying feet. She reached the clubhouse, but the course was empty except for the Scooper, who was preparing to drive off the first tee. In spite of the fact that something seemed to tell her subconsciously that this was one of the sights she ought not to miss, the girl did not wait to watch. Assuming that the match had started soon after breakfast, it must by now have reached one of the holes on the second nine. She ran down the hill, looking to left and right, and was presently aware of a group of spectators clustered about a green in the distance. As she hurried toward them they moved away, and now she could see Ferdinand advancing to the next tee. With a thrill that shook her whole body she realized that he had the honor. So he must have won one hole, at any rate. Then she saw her uncle.

"How are they?" she gasped.

Mr. Tuttle seemed moody. It was apparent that things were not going altogether to his liking.

"All square at the fifteenth," he replied, gloomily.

"All square!"

"Yes. Young Parsloe," said Mr. Tuttle with a sour look in the direction of that lissom athlete, "doesn't seem to be able to do a thing right on the greens. He has been putting like a sheep with the botts."

From the foregoing remark of Mr. Tuttle you will, no doubt, have gleaned at least a clue to the mystery of how Ferdinand Dibble had managed to hold his long-driving adversary up to the fifteenth green, but for all that you will probably consider that some further explanation of this amazing state of affairs is required. Mere bad putting on the part of George Parsloe is not, you feel, sufficient to cover the matter entirely. You are right. There was another very important factor in the situation—to wit, that by some extraordinary chance Ferdinand Dibble had started right off from the first tee playing the game of a lifetime. Never had he made such drives, never chipped his chip so shrewdly.

About Ferdinand's driving there was as a general thing a fatal stiffness and overcaution which prevented success. And with his chip shots he rarely achieved accuracy owing to his habit of rearing his head like the lion of the jungle just before the club struck the ball. But today he had been swinging with a careless freedom, and his chips had been true and clean. The thing had puzzled him all the way round. It had not elated him, for, owing to Barbara's aloofness and the way in which she had gamboled about George Parsloe like a young lamb in the springtime, he was in too deep a state of dejection to be elated by anything. And now, suddenly, in a flash of clear vision, he perceived the reason why he had been playing so well to-day. It was just because he was not elated. It was simply because he was so profoundly miserable.

That was what Ferdinand told himself as he stepped off the sixteenth, after hitting a screamer down the center of the fairway, and I am convinced that he was right. Like so many indifferent golfers, Ferdinand Dibble had always made the game hard for himself by thinking too much. He was a deep student of the works of the masters, and whenever he prepared to play a stroke he had a complete mental list of all the mistakes which it was possible to make. He would remember how Taylor had warned against dipping the right shoulder, how Vardon had inveighed against any movement of the head; he would recall how Ray had mentioned the tendency to snatch back the club, how Braid had spoken sadly of those who sin against their better selves by stiffening the muscles and heaving.

The consequence was that when, after wagging in a frozen manner till mere shame urged him to take some definite course of action, he eventually swung, he invariably proceeded to dip his right shoulder, stiffen his muscles, heave, and snatch back the club, at the same time raising his head sharply as in the illustrated plate ("Some Frequent Faults of Beginners—No. 3—Lifting the Bean") facing page thirty-

four of James Braid's *Golf Without Tears*. Today he had been so pre-occupied with his broken heart that he had made his shots absently, almost carelessly, with the result that at least one in every three had been a lallapaloosa.

Meanwhile, George Parsloe had driven off and the match was progressing. George was feeling a little flustered by now. He had been given to understand that this bird Dibble was a hundred-at-his-best man, and all the way round the fellow had been reeling off fives in great profusion, and had once actually got a four. True, there had been an occasional six, and even a seven, but that did not alter the main fact that the man was making the dickens of a game of it. With the haughty spirit of one who had once done a ninety-four, George Parsloe had anticipated being at least three up at the turn. Instead of which he had been two down, and had to fight strenuously to draw level.

Nevertheless, he drove steadily and well, and would certainly have won the hole had it not been for his weak and sinful putting. The same defect caused him to halve the seventeenth, after being on in two, with Ferdinand wandering in the desert and only reaching the green with his fourth. Then, however, Ferdinand holed out from a distance of seven yards, getting a five, which George's three putts just enabled him to equal.

Barbara had watched the proceedings with a beating heart. At first she had looked on from afar; but now, drawn as by a magnet, she approached the tee. Ferdinand was driving off. She held her breath. Ferdinand held his breath. And all around one could see their respective breaths being held by George Parsloe, Mr. Tuttle, and the enthralled crowd of spectators. It was a moment of the acutest tension, and it was broken by the crack of Ferdinand's driver as it met the ball and sent it hopping along the ground for a mere thirty yards. At this supreme crisis in the match Ferdinand Dibble had topped.

George Parsloe teed up his ball. There was a smile of quiet satisfaction on his face. He snuggled the driver in his hands and gave it a preliminary swish. This, felt George Parsloe, was where the happy ending came. He could drive as he had never driven before. He would so drive that it would take his opponent at least three shots to catch up with him. He drew back his club with infinite caution, poised it at the top of the swing—

"I always wonder . . ." said a clear, girlish voice, ripping the silence like the explosion of a bomb.

George Parsloe started. His club wobbled. It descended. The ball trickled into the long grass in front of the tee. There was a grim pause.

"You were saying, Miss Medway . . ." said George Parsloe, in a small, flat voice.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said Barbara. "I'm afraid I put you off."

"A little, perhaps. Possibly the merest trifle. But you were saying you wondered about something. Can I be of any assistance?"

"I was only saying," said Barbara, "that I always wonder why tees are called tees."

George Parsloe swallowed once or twice. He also blinked a little feverishly. His eyes had a dazed, staring expression.

"I'm afraid I cannot tell you offhand," he said, "but I will make a point of consulting some good encyclopedia at the earliest opportunity."

"Thank you so much."

"Not at all. It will be a pleasure. In case you were thinking of inquiring at the moment when I am putting why greens are called greens, may I venture the suggestion now that it is because they are green?"

And, so saying, George Parsloe stalked to his ball and found it nestling in the heart of some shrub of which, not being a botanist, I cannot give you the name. It was a close-knit, adhesive shrub, and it twined its tentacles so loving around George Parsloe's niblick that he missed his first shot altogether. His second made the ball rock, and his third dislodged it. Playing a full swing with his brassie and being by now a mere cauldron of seething emotions he missed his fourth. His fifth came to within a few inches of Ferdinand's drive, and he picked it up and hurled it from him into the rough as if it had been something venomous.

"Your hole and match," said George Parsloe, thinly.

Ferdinand Dibble sat beside the glittering ocean. He had hurried off the course with swift strides the moment George Parsloe had spoken those bitter words. He wanted to be alone with his thoughts.

They were mixed thoughts. For a moment joy at the reflection that he had won a tough match came irresistibly to the surface, only to sink again as he remembered that life, whatever its triumphs, could hold nothing for him now that Barbara Medway loved another.

"Mr. Dibble!"

He looked up. She was standing at his side. He gulped and rose to his feet.

"Yes?"

There was a silence.

"Doesn't the sun look pretty on the water?" said Barbara.

Ferdinand groaned. This was too much.

"Leave me," he said, hollowly. "Go back to your Parsloe, the man with whom you walked in the moonlight beside this same water."

"Well, why shouldn't I walk with Mr. Parsloe in the moonlight beside this same water?" demanded Barbara, with spirit.

"I never said," replied Ferdinand, for he was a fair man at heart, "that you shouldn't walk with Mr. Parsloe beside this same water. I simply said you did walk with Mr. Parsloe beside this same water."

"I've a perfect right to walk with Mr. Parsloe beside this same water," persisted Barbara. "He and I are old friends."

Ferdinand groaned again.

"Exactly! There you are! As I suspected. Old friends. Played together as children, and what not, I shouldn't wonder."

"No, we didn't. I've only known him five years. But he is engaged to be married to my greatest chum, so that draws us together."

Ferdinand uttered a strangled cry.

"Parsloe engaged to be married!"

"Yes. The wedding takes place next month."

"But look here." Ferdinand's forehead was wrinkled. He was thinking tensely. "Look here," said Ferdinand, a close reasoner. "If Parsloe's engaged to your greatest chum, he can't be in love with you."

"No."

"And you aren't in love with him?"

"No."

"Then, by gad," said Ferdinand, "how about it?"

"What do you mean?"

"Will you marry me?" belowed Ferdinand.

"Yes."

"You will?"

"Of course I will."

"Darling!" cried Ferdinand.

"There is only one thing that bothers me a bit," said Ferdinand, thoughtfully, as they strolled together over the scented meadows, while in the trees above them a thousand birds trilled Mendelssohn's Wedding March.

"What is that?"

"Well, I'll tell you," said Ferdinand. "The fact is, I've just discovered the great secret of golf. You can't play a really hot game unless you're so miserable that you don't worry over your shots. Take the case of a chip shot, for instance. If you're really wretched, you don't

care where the ball is going and so you don't raise your head to see. Grief automatically prevents pressing and overswinging. Look at the top-notchers. Have you ever seen a happy pro?"

"No. I don't think I have."

"Well, then!"

"But pros are all Scotchmen," argued Barbara.

"It doesn't matter. I'm sure I'm right. And the darned thing is that I'm going to be so infernally happy all the rest of my life that I suppose my handicap will go up to thirty or something."

Barbara squeezed his hand lovingly.

"Don't worry, precious," she said, soothingly. "It will be all right. I am a woman, and, once we are married, I shall be able to think of at least a hundred ways of snootering you to such an extent that you'll be fit to win the Amateur Championship."

"You will?" said Ferdinand, anxiously. "You're sure?"

"Quite, quite sure, dearest," said Barbara.

"My angel!" said Ferdinand.

He folded her in his arms, using the interlocking grip.